



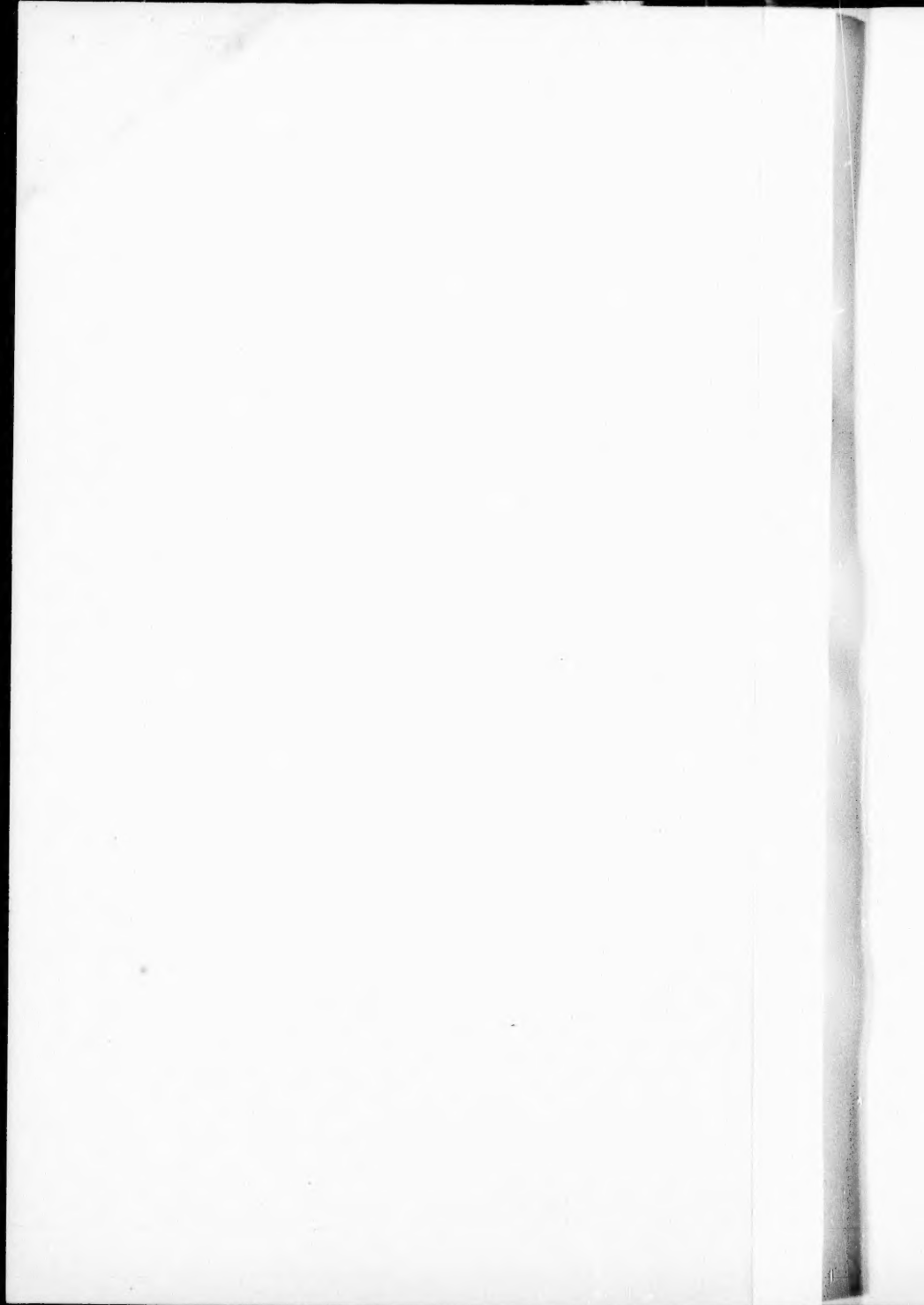
ESSAYS  
FROM  
REVIEWS

BY  
GEORGE STEWART,  
D. LITT., LL.D., D.C.L.



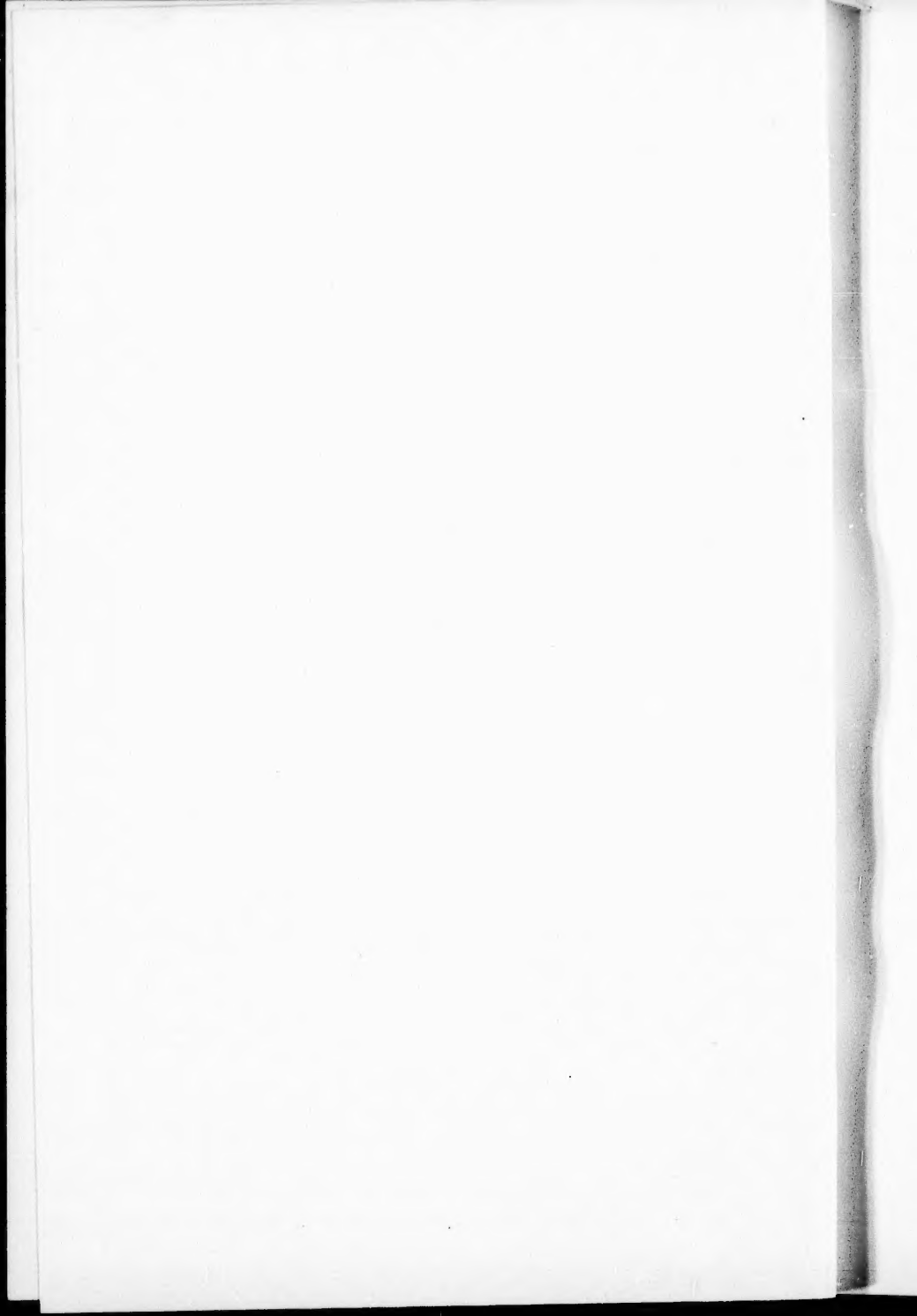
QUEBEC:  
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PRINTED AT THE  
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QUEBEC, 1892.

TO  
JOHN GEORGE BOURINOT,

C.M.G., LL.D., D.C.L.,

*President of the Royal Society of Canada,*

In remembrance of a long, unbroken friendship,

I dedicate this book.

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## PREFACE.

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*In the SCOTTISH REVIEW, published at Paisley, London and New York, and in the ARENA, published at Boston, Mass., there appeared at intervals, during the last few years, several papers of mine on American poets and their art. At the request of some friends, I have made a selection of these Essays from Reviews. The sketches in this little volume, dealing in a general way, with the lives and careers of LONGFELLOW, LOWELL, HOLMES and WHITTIER, are intended as introductions to the writings of the great New England quartette of singers, whose work has done so much to make literature in America, what it is to-day.*

*I shall be very glad if these notes prove helpful to the student. My object will be realized, if they have the effect of sending to the works herein described, many new readers and friends.*

*Quebec, October, 1892.*



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## LIFE AND TIMES OF LONGFELLOW.\*

(*The Scottish Review*, July, 1886.)

—§—

*His heart was pure, his purpose high,  
His thought serene, his patience vast ;  
He put all strifes of passion by,  
And lived to God, from first to last.*

WILLIAM WINTER.

IN these pleasant volumes we have the simple and uneventful story of a poet's life. It is chiefly autobiographical in form, and the editor has been careful to follow the lines which Mr. Trevelyan laid down with conspicuous success in his biography of Macau-

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*\*Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ; with Extracts from his Journals and Correspondence. Edited by SAMUEL LONGFELLOW. 2 Vols. London, and Boston, Massachusetts.*

lay. Wherever possible, the subject is allowed to tell his own story, and the narrative is enriched with copious extracts from journals and letters. The editor may safely be congratulated on the thoroughness with which he has performed his task. If there be fault to find, it must be on the score of excessiveness in the employment of material, many trivial things being included which might with advantage have been omitted. The book is really a most wholesome contribution to our literature. It is interesting, gossipy, and instructive, and tells all that one may wish to know about a sweet and lovable character, and genuine man of letters. That such a life, passed in the study and among books and manuscripts, may have been uneventful, can readily be granted. The editor undertakes to say no more, but quiet and undisturbed as the poet's life was, this account of his career is full of interest to the reader of literary history, while the letters and journals are rich in incidents of a purely intel

lectual kind. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, more nearly than any of his contemporaries, fulfils Emerson's definition of a true poet. He was a heart in unison with his time and his country. He was less distinctively American in his poetry, perhaps, than either Bryant or Whittier. His choice of subjects was confined to no particular latitude, and though his work is often full of local colour, much that he wrote was European in texture and in incident. He was a profound lover of nature, but Bryant was often superior to him in the treatment of forest, and plant, and bird life. In poetry of the affections, Longfellow undoubtedly took the higher place among his American contemporaries. Here he was always superbly strong and sympathetic, and his love lyrics are quite among the brightest of his shorter pieces. They reveal a nice delicacy of touch, and are suggestive of purity and sweetness only, the methods of the fleshly school of singers being utterly uncongenial to his nature.

He was born in Portland, Maine, on the 27th February, 1807, and came from Puritan ancestry. The home of his childhood, noted as having been the first brick house in his native city, had been built by his mother's father, General Peleg Wadsworth, in the years 1784-86. 'Now quite in the heart of the business quarter, it was then on the extreme outskirts of the town, in the midst of fields. Hither Zilpah Wadsworth, the boy's mother, had come when seven years old; here she was married; here she returned now with her husband and two boys, in 1808, to pass the rest of her life. She was the third of eleven children of Peleg Wadsworth and Elizabeth Bartlett, who had, after their marriage, removed to Portland from Duxbury in Massachusetts, whither their ancestors had emigrated from England.' Stephen Longfellow, the poet's father, was a college bred man, one of Harvard's sons, the classmate of Dr. Channing, Judges Story and White, and a barrister of high repute and spotless

integrity. At an early age he took a strong position in his profession, and in 1814, as a 'Federalist' in politics, he was sent to the Massachusetts legislature. He was also the representative of his State for one term in the National Congress. Though Stephen Longfellow was not a man of letters, he had a passion for literature and music, and his first care was to provide books of the better class for the use of his family. Young Longfellow may be said to have been born in a library, of which the English classics, the poets and essayists of the time, Don Quixote, the Arabian Nights, and Ossian formed no inconsiderable part. The future poet was deeply impressed with the Scottish bard, and, we are told, he used to go about the house reciting favorite passages and often whole poems from the minstrel. But of all the books which he was able to read in his very young days, no work appealed to him with greater intensity than the *Sketch Book* of Washington Irving, which at once awak-

ened literary aspirations in his mind. It was of the *Sketch Book* that he wrote 'Every reader has his first book—I mean to say, one book among all others which in early youth first fascinates his imagination, and at once excites and satisfies the desires of his mind. To me, this first book was the *Sketch Book* of Washington Irving. I was a school-boy when it was published and read each succeeding number with ever increasing wonder and delight, spell-bound by its pleasant humour, its melancholy tenderness, its atmosphere of reverie—nay, even by its grey-brown covers, the shaded letters of its titles, and the fair clear type which seemed an outward symbol of its style. How many delightful books the same author has given us. . . . Yet still the charm of the *Sketch Book* remains unbroken; the old fascination remains about it; and whenever I open its pages, I open also that mysterious door which leads back into the haunted chambers of youth.' The poet's school-days began when

he was but three years of age, and he was not more than six when he entered the Portland Academy, 'a handsome boy, retiring without being reserved. There was a frankness about him that won you at once. He looked you square in the face. His eyes were full of expression, and it seemed as though you could look down into them as into a clear spring.' His first letter was written to his father in 1814, and it is published in this *Life*, as the beginning of the series which continued for many years to pass between parent and son. The boy writes :

'Dear Papa,—Ann wants a little Bible like little Betsey's. Will you please buy her one, if you can find any in Boston. I have been to school all the week, and got only seven marks. I shall have a billet on Monday. I wish you to buy me a drum.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.'

At school he got on well. He was a favourite with his class-mates, and though he had no love for rude sports, he delighted in



bathing in a little creek on the border of Deering's Oaks, and, says Elijah Kellogg, 'he would tramp through the woods at times with a gun; but this was mostly through the influence of others; he loved much better to lie under a tree and read.' This is what Longfellow thought of his master :

'I remember the school-master at the Academy, and the mingled odour that hovered about him of tobacco, india-rubber, and lead pencil. A nervous, excitable man. When we left school I went with a school-mate to take leave of him, and thank him for his patience with us. He thought we were in jest; and gave me a stern lecture on good behaviour and the trials of a teacher's life.'

His vacations were spent in long journeyings about the neighbouring towns and villages. On one occasion, while engaged in a trip of this sort, he learned the story of the Indian fight at Lovell's Pond. The episode emphasized itself into his mind, and he wrote a poem on the subject. He was thirteen years of age, and from this effort is

dated the beginning of his literary career. The Battle of Lovell's Pond was sent, with fear and trembling, to the *Portland Literary Gazette*, which promptly accepted it, and published it in its issue of November 17, 1820, in the Poet's Corner. The four stanzas give no promise of the poet's future, though the sentiment may be applauded. His sister was the only sharer of his confidences, and she was as much excited as he was over the fate of the bantling. Says the editor :

'We may imagine the impatience with which they watched the unfolding of the damp sheet in their father's methodical hands, and the rising vapour as he held it before the wood fire to dry. Slowly he read the paper, and said nothing—perhaps saw nothing—of the verses, and the children kept their secret. But when they could get the paper—the poem was there! Inexpressible was the boy's delight, and innumerable the times that he read and re-read his performance, each time with increasing satisfaction. In the evening he went to visit at the house of Judge Mellen, his father's friend, whose son, Frederick, was his

own intimate. In the circle gathered about the fire, the talk turned upon poetry. The judge took up the morning's *Gazette*. "Did you see the piece in to-day's paper? Very stiff, remarkably stiff; moreover, it is all borrowed, every word of it." The boy's heart sank within him, and he would gladly have sunk through the floor. He got out of the house as soon as possible, without betraying himself. Shall we blame him that there were tears on his pillow that night? It was his first encounter with "the critic," from whom he was destined to hear much, not always complimentary, and of whom he had more than once something not very complimentary to say.'

Mrs. James T. Fields tells this story in a slightly different way in a recent number of the *Century Magazine* (April 1886). She says the conceited old judge called on his son to bring forward *his* statelier lines on the same subject.

In 1821 Longfellow went to Bowdoin College, and found himself a member of the class which included Nathaniel Hawthorne, Abbot, and one or two others, who in after life

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became famous. He was ever a hard student and careful observer. He read much, and constantly sent home to his parents brief criticisms on what he had read. Thomas Gray he admired greatly, and his letters to his mother on the 'Elegy' and other poems which caught his fancy, are full of interest and decided charm. His letters to his father, too, show how keenly alert his literary aspirations and sympathies were. His parents encouraged his tastes, and he made excellent progress, graduating fourth in a class of thirty-eight. He wrote a good many verses while at college, and most of these appeared in 1824 and 1825 in the *U. S. Literary Gazette*, edited by Theophilus Parsons. In the fifteenth number of this serial appeared 'Thanksgiving,' by H. W. L., and it was followed in succeeding numbers by sixteen others. In November, 1824, the editor wrote to Longfellow :

'SIR,—Messrs. Cummings, Hilliard & Co., have handed me some verses sent by you to

them for the Editor of the *U. S. Literary Gazette*. In reply to the question attached to them, I can only say that almost all the poetry we print is sent us *gratis*, and that we have no general rule or measure of repayment. But the beauty of your poetry makes me wish to obtain your regular aid . . . Would you be kind enough to let me know what mode or amount of compensation you desire. For the prose we publish we pay one dollar a column.'

Of the poems published in this periodical, five were afterwards deemed worthy of being included in the poet's first volume, the 'Voices of the Night.' In a letter written to his father, dated March 13, 1824, we have the first indication of Longfellow's anxiety regarding his future calling. He writes :

'And now, as somehow or other, the subject has been introduced, I am curious to know what you do intend to make of one—whether I am to study a profession or not, and, if so, what profession. I hope your ideas upon this subject will agree with mine, for I have a particular and strong prejudice for one course of life, to which you, I fear, will not agree.

It will not be worth while for me to mention what this is, until I become more acquainted with your own wishes.'

On December 31, he continues the subject in this strain :

'I am very desirous to hear your opinion of my project of residing a year at Cambridge. Even if it should be found necessary for me to study a profession, I should think a 12 months' residence at Harvard before commencing the study would be exceedingly useful. Of divinity, medicine and law, I should choose the last. Whatever I do study ought to be engaged in with all my soul, for I *will be eminent* in something. The question then is, whether I could engage in the law with all that eagerness which in these times is necessary to success. I fear that I could not. Ought I not then to choose another path, in which I can go on with better hopes? Let me reside one year at Cambridge; let me study *belles-lettres*; and after that time it will not require a spirit of prophecy to predict with some degree of certainty what kind of a figure I could make in the literary world.'

His father, naturally enough, designed him for the law, but a circumstance occurred

which changed the young man's future. He was graduated with honours in 1825. Through the liberality of Madam Bowdoin, after whose husband the college had been named, a chair of modern languages was founded, and the youthful poet was offered the professorship. Before accepting, he determined to fit himself for the position by undertaking a visit to Europe. He left America in 1826, and though it had been his intention to remain away only a twelvemonth, he spent very nearly three years and a half in France, Spain, Italy, Holland, and Germany, and the British Isles. He acquired languages readily, and it was not long before he had attained sufficient mastery of German, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese, to enable him to give instruction in those tongues. He made the journey on foot through France. To his brother Stephen he writes from Paris in October :

‘I began the pedestrian part of my journey on one of those dull, melancholy days, which

you will find uttering a mournful voice in Sewall's Almanack : " Expect-much-rain-about - this - time ! " " Very miscellaneous weather, good for sundry purposes," but not for a journey on foot, thought I. But I had a merry heart, and it went merrily all day. At sundown I found myself about seven leagues on my way, and one beyond Beaugency. I found the route one continued vineyard. On each side of the road, as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but vines, save here and there a glimpse of the Loire, the turrets of an old château, or spire of a village church. The clouds had passed away with the morning, and I had made a fine day's journey, cutting across the country, traversing vineyards, and living in all the luxury of thought which the occasion inspired. I recollect that at sunset I had entered a path which wound through a wide vineyard, where the villagers were still at their labours, and I was loitering along, talking with the peasantry and searching for an *auberge* to pass the night in. I was presently overtaken by a band of villagers ; I wished them a good evening, and finding that the girls of the party were going to a village at a short distance, I joined myself to the band. I wanted to get into one of the cottages, if possible, in order to study character.



I had a flute in my knapsack, and I thought it would be very pretty to touch up at a cottage door, Goldsmith-like, though I would not have done it for the world without an invitation. Well, before long, I determined to get an invitation, if possible. So I addressed the girl who was walking beside me, told her I had a flute in my sack, and asked her if she would like to dance. Now laugh long and loud! What do you suppose her answer was? She said she liked to dance, but she did not know what a flute was! What havoc that made among my romantic ideas! My *quietus* was made: I said no more about a flute the whole journey through; and I thought nothing but starvation would drive me to strike up at the entrance of a village, as Goldsmith did.'

All of his letters from Europe to his friends are charming. They are rich in description and in incident, and many things come upon him like a revelation. From France he went to the north of Spain. At Madrid he met Washington Irving, and, as we may imagine, the meeting was a delightful one for him. The Basque girls he found very handsome,

and the picturesque and striking scenery of Spain gave him rare pleasure. Andalusia, Cordova, Seville, in turn afforded his susceptible nature the keenest of delights. In 1828 he went to Italy, the next year to Germany, and from them both he sent breezy, fresh and characteristic letters. He was only twenty-two when his travels came to an end, but he had learned much, and when he arrived home in 1829, he felt refreshed, and ready for his work. Very soon after his appointment, he took up his residence in Brunswick, Maine. 'He occupied,' says his brother, 'rooms in one of the college halls, taking his meals in a private family. He at once devoted himself zealously to his duties of teaching. Finding no French Grammar which suited him, he translated and printed for the use of his pupils the grammar of L'Homond, which had the merit always in his eyes of containing all the essentials in a small compass. He had always disliked large books. In the same year he edited for his classes a

collection of French *Proverbes Dramatiques*, and a small Spanish reader, *Novelas Espanolas*, taken from the *Tareas de un Solitario* of Jorge W. Montgomery—a copy of which had been given him by Mr. Everett in Madrid.' He held the chair five and a half years, when George Ticknor, who had been favourably drawn towards him by his contributions to the *North American Review*, which dealt largely with the romance literature, offered him the professorship of Modern Languages, in Harvard University, which carried a salary of \$1,500 a year. In the meantime, in September, 1831, he had espoused the hand of Mary Storer Potter, the second daughter of Judge Potter, of Portland. 'Her character and person were alike lovely.' They were tenderly devoted to each other, and very soon after their marriage they began house-keeping at Brunswick, in a house which still stands under its elms in Federal Street. Of his study he writes in his diary :  
' June 23. I can almost fancy myself in

Spain, the morning is so soft and beautiful. The tessellated shadow of the honeysuckle lies motionless upon my study floor, as if it were a figure in the carpet, and through the window comes the fragrance of the wild brier and the mock orange. The birds are carolling in the trees, and their shadows flit across the window as they dart to and fro in the sunshine; while the murmur of the bee, the cooing of doves from the eaves, and the whirring of a little humming-bird that has its nest in the honey suckle, send up a sound of joy to meet the rising sun.'

Before leaving home Longfellow had published *Outre-mer*, which found great acceptance with the public. In 1835, Prof. Ticknor resigned his chair at Harvard, and to fit himself for his enlarged sphere of action, the poet accompanied by his wife, undertook a second journey abroad, leaving America in April, and visiting in turn, England, Scandinavia, Germany and the Swiss cantons. He spent three weeks in London, breakfasted with Sir John Bowring, dined with the Lockharts, and met among others, Jane Porter,

Mr. Babbage, Lady Morgan, Hayward, the translator of Faust, Mrs. Blackwood, Lady Seymour, and Lady Dudley Stuart, daughter of Lucien Bonaparte. At the house of the latter, he heard Rubini and Grisi sing. Emerson had given him a letter to Carlyle, and writes Mrs. Longfellow :—

‘ Mr. Carlyle of Craigenputtoch was soon after announced, and passed a half-hour with us, much to our delight. He has very unpolished manners and a broad Scottish accent, but such fine language and beautiful thoughts that it is truly delightful to listen to him. He invited us to take tea with them at Chelsea, where they now reside. We were as much charmed with Mrs. C. as with her husband. She is a lovely woman, with very simple and pleasing manners; she is also very talented and accomplished, and how delightful it is to see such modesty combined with such power to please.’

At Rotterdam, Longfellow's wife fell ill, in November, and after suffering a few days she died. The poet felt the first real pang of sorrow which he had ever experienced,

and shortly afterwards he wrote to his father, 'every day makes me more conscious of the loss I have suffered in Mary's death; and when I think how gentle and affectionate and good she was, every moment of her life, even to the last, and that she will be no more with me in this world,—the sense of my bereavement is deep and unutterable.

But he had work to do, and though his heart was sore, he did not falter, or give way to despair. From Rotterdam he went to Heidelberg, where he formed the acquaintance of Bryant and his family, and spent the winter and spring of 1836. Towards the end of June he journeyed to the Tyrol and Switzerland. In the latter country he met Miss Appleton, then in her nineteenth year, the lady who a few years later, became his second wife. In December, 1836, Mr. Longfellow assumed the duties of his chair at Harvard. The staff of the college was especially strong in distinguished men at that time: Josiah Quincy was president, and with

him were associated Henry Ware, senior, John G. Palfrey, Joseph Story, Simon Greenleaf, Charles Sumner, Charles Beck, and C. C. Felton. Jared Sparks, the historian, Francis Bowen, Benjamin Pierce, Prof. Hedge, Andrews, Norton and Washington Allston, poet and artist, lived in Cambridge then. Later came Hawthorne as a visitor and friend, and Lowell and the others followed. The *North American Review* was in the zenith of its fame, and most of these writers were among its more brilliant contributors. They formed a coterie, reviewed each other's books, and earned the sharp criticism of Poe, whose bitter attacks on Longfellow and his friends are remembered yet. The society of Cambridge was very delightful, and the story of the poet's life, passed amid such agreeable surroundings, is told in letters and extracts from his daily journal. His duties as Professor, after a time, grew irksome, and there is frequent mention in his diary of the trials he underwent. Still, he held his post for

eighteen years, and it was not until 1854 that he retired, and made room for Mr. Lowell, though as early as 1850 he wrote : ' I seriously think of resigning my professorship. My time is so fully taken up that I have none left for writing. Then my eyes are suffering, and the years are precious. And if I wish to do anything in literature, it must be done now.' Few men, he says later on, have written good poetry after fifty. But the poet himself exposed the fallacy of this conclusion, for he was past that age when he produced ' Miles Standish,' ' The Saga of King Olaf,' ' The Tales of a Wayside Inn,' ' The Translation of Dante,' ' Hanging of the Crane,' and ' Keramos.' In June, 1853, we find more complaints about the arduous character of his work, ' Six hours in the lecture-room like a School-master.' ' I must retire,' he says again ; but he did not retire yet, and on April 19th, he wrote, ' at 11 o'clock in number 6 University Hall, I delivered my last lecture—the last I shall



ever deliver here or elsewhere.' Six months afterwards, he received a letter from the President accepting his resignation, and the poet was at last free from his drudgery.

In 1839, he published his romance, *Hyperion*, and the poems included in 'Voices of the Night,' and three years later there appeared 'Ballads and other Poems,' followed in 1843 by the 'Spanish Student,' a drama cast in the Shakespearian mould, vigorous in conception and individuality, but incapable of representation on the stage. In this year, too, he married Frances Elizabeth Appleton, daughter of Nathan Appleton, of Boston. She was a woman of stately presence and cultivated intellect. Underwood, who met her often, describes her as the 'possessor of every grace of mind and person that could charm the heart of a poet.' She is said to have been the original of 'Mary Ashburton' in the story of *Hyperion*, and like that young lady she twice withstood a siege to her heart before she yielded. Eighteen years of hap-

pinness blessed the union, and five children were born to them, but at the last, Mrs. Longfellow was the victim of a terrible tragedy, which well nigh crushed the heart out of the poet. The Journal breaks off suddenly at the 8th of July, 1861, and 'the break,' says the biographer, 'marked a break in his very life; an awful chasm that suddenly, and without the slightest warning, opened at his feet.' The sad story is thus related :

'On the 9th of July his wife was sitting in the library with her two little girls engaged in sealing up some small packages of their curls, which she had just cut off. From a match fallen upon the floor her light summer dress caught fire; the shock was too great, and she died the next morning. Three days later her burial took place at Mount Auburn. It was the anniversary of her marriage-day, and on her beautiful head, lovely and unmarred in death, some hand had placed a wreath of orange blossoms. Her husband was not there—confined to his chamber by the severe burns which he had himself received. These wounds healed with time; time could only assuage, never heal, the deeper wounds

that burned within. He bore his grief in silence; only after months had passed could he speak of it, and then only in fewest words. To a visitor who expressed a hope that he might be enabled to "bear his cross" with patience, he replied—"Bear the cross, yes; but what if one is stretched upon it?"

From that dreadful moment the poet was never quite himself, and five years passed away ere he wrote verses of his own again. Eighteen years afterward, looking over an illustrated book of Western scenery, his attention was arrested by a picture of that mysterious mountain upon whose lonely, lofty breast the snow lies in long furrows that make a rude but wonderfully clear image of a vast cross. 'At night, as he looked upon the pictured countenance that hung from his chamber wall, his thoughts framed themselves in the verses that follow. He put them away in his portfolio, where they were found after his death.' These verses, never before published, bear the date July, 1879 :

## THE CROSS OF SNOW.

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,  
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—  
Looks at me from the wall, where round its  
head

The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.  
Here in this room she died, and soul more white  
Never through martyrdom of fire was led  
To its repose ; nor can in books be read  
The legend of a life more benedight.  
There is a mountain in the distant West  
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines  
Displays a cross of snow upon its side :  
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast  
These eighteen years, through all the chang-  
ing scenes  
And seasons, changeless since the day she  
died.

The letters and journals are especially rich  
in reminiscences, hints about the progress of  
the poet's work, chit-chat about passing  
events, and pleasant accounts of literary men  
and women. The editor, for the most part,  
prints only agreeable ana. Where something  
unpleasant is to be said about any one, the  
name is withheld in nearly every instance.

Longfellow's nature was very lovable, and he disliked to give pain. When he said no, he always tried to say it as softly as he could. His brother appreciating this trait in his character, suppresses everything that might, in the slightest way, hurt the feelings of any one living. In the diary we have much concerning the poet's books. These notes are delicious always. Of 'Evangeline,' we find this account by the editor. The story has been told before, but we may give it here :

'Mr. Hawthorne came one day to dine at Craigie House, bringing with him his friend, Mr. H. L. Conolly, who had been the rector of a church in South Boston. At dinner, Conolly said that he had been trying in vain to interest Hawthorne to write a story upon an incident which had been related to him by a parishioner of his, Mrs. Haliburton. It was the story of a young Acadian maiden, who at the dispersion of her people by the English troops had been separated from her betrothed lover; they sought each other for years in their exile; and at last they met in a hospital where the lover lay dying. Mr. Longfellow was touched by the story, especially by the

constancy of its heroine, and said to his friend, if you really do not want this incident for a tale, let me have it for a poem ; and Hawthorne consented. Out of this grew *Evangeline*, whose heroine was at first called *Gabrielle*. For the history of the dispersion of the Acadians the poet read such books as were attainable ; Haliburton, for instance, with his quotations from the Abbé Raynal. Had he been writing a history he perhaps would have gone to Nova Scotia to consult unpublished archives. But, as he was writing a poem, a tale of love and constancy, for which there was needed only a slight historical background, he took the authorities which were at hand. Later investigations and more recent publications have shown that the deportation had more justification than had been supposed ; that some, at least of the Acadians, so far from being innocent sufferers, had been troublesome subjects of Great Britain fomenting insubordination and giving help to the enemy. But, if the expatriation was necessary, it was none the less cruel, and involved in suffering many who were innocent of wrong.'

In the journal is this entry, '7th December, 1845. I know not what name to give to—

not my new baby, but my new poem. Shall it be "Gabrielle," or "Celestine," or "Evangeline?" Two years later, on the 15th of October, Longfellow wrote in his diary, 'Evangeline published.' He employed the English dactylic hexameter, because, as he told Barry Cornwall in his letter accompanying a presentation copy of the poem, 'I could not write it *as it is* in any other; it would have changed its character entirely to have put it into a different measure.' Conolly published Hawthorne's review shortly after the work came out, in his newspaper, and the novelist sent a copy to Longfellow, who thus charmingly acknowledged the gift:

'I hope Mr. Conolly does not think I spoilt the tale he told, in any way of narrating it. I received his paper containing your notice of the book, and thank you both for such friendly service. Still more do I thank you for resigning to me that legend of Acady. This success I owe entirely to you for being willing to forego the pleasure of writing a prose tale which many people would have taken for

poetry, that I might write a poem which many people take for prose.'

He cared very little for the critics, and what they said. He did not resent Poe's attacks until long afterward, and then only slightly and without malice. Once he told William Winter that whenever he encountered anything unpleasant about him in his newspaper, or in articles sent to him marked and scored, he would look at a few lines, and then quietly throw the offensive thing into the fire, and it never troubled him again. Margaret Fuller's criticism, he characterized as a 'bilious attack.' He allowed himself to say no harsher words.

The bores, the autograph hunters, and the idle people who stole precious hours from him, figure frequently in these volumes. He rarely refused to give his autograph, and sometimes he wrote out whole poems when asked. Letters poured into him by the hundred, asking all sorts of favours. From—— he receives a poem and a letter '*demanding*



that I shall read and criticise it for him. I will not do any such thing, unless Congress pass a special law requiring it of me.' The newspaper correspondents worried him too, and infested every nook and corner of his home, destroying all privacy, and 'proclaiming to the world the colour of your gloves and the style of your shoe-tie.' A vendor of essences approached him in the twilight of an autumn evening and 'offered a great bargain; namely that he would give me a dollar's worth of his essences, and I should write for him a poetical epistle to Jenny Lind asking charity in his behalf. Stupid dolt! It took me some time to make him comprehend the indecency of his behaviour. Truly an ignoble Yankee is a very ignoble thing.'

Longfellow was no politician, though he took some interest always in the public affairs of his country. He was friendly to the cause of the Abolitionists, and Whittier pressed him in 1844 to run for Congress as

the candidate of the Liberty party. Of course, he refused. The German and French Revolutions, the Mexican war, the anti-slavery crusade, and the Civil War in America, excited him very much. He took a warm personal interest in the fortunes of his friend, Charles Sumner. Webster's 'abominable speech' in 1850 provoked the sharp words, 'is it possible, is this the Titan who hurled mountains at Hayne years ago.' 'Yet,' he continues, 'what has there been in Webster's life to lead us to think that he would take any high moral ground on slavery?' Eliot's vote for the Fugitive Slave Bill, he stigmatizes as 'a dark disgrace to the city' of Boston. The war of 1861 found him sad indeed. To that bloody fray he sent one of his sons, who was wounded, but did not die. He inserts in the journal :—

'January 28.—Six States have left the Union, led by South Carolina. President Buchanan is an antediluvian, an après moi le déluge President, who does not care what happens,

if he gets safely through his term. We owe the present state of things mainly to him. He has sympathized with the disunionists. It is now too late to put the fire out. We must let it burn.

February 15.—The dissolution of the Union goes slowly on. Behind it all I hear the low murmur of the slaves, like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, prophesying woe, woe!

In this gloomy fashion he goes on, saying now, 'at the gateway of the State-house two youths of twenty, with smooth, fair cheeks, stand sentry. Ah, woe, the day.' And again. 'The burden seems too great for me to bear.'

Longfellow was genial always. He shrank from publicity and notoriety, and often would not go to places where speeches were to be made, lest he should be called on to speak. The society of sympathetic souls, his intimates, always filled him with happiness. The German poets impressed him strongly and coloured his literary tastes. His enthusiasm for Jean Paul, and Goethe,

and Heine, was as unbounded as Carlyle's. The poetry of Spain, and of Italy, too, was his delight, Lope, Calderon and Dante being favourites of his from a very early time. Bishop Tegner, he declared, was the only great poet that Sweden possessed, and his heroic poem of *Frithiofs Saga* drew from him unqualified praise. Of living English poets, Tennyson and Browning impressed him most, and he read their works, as published, with zest and pleasure. In these volumes we have many glimpses of literary men and women with whom Longfellow formed friendships, though the editor must have curtailed the list. Bryant, as we have said, he met at Heidelberg in 1835, but though letters occasionally passed between the two poets, they did not see each other often. Hawthorne was a class-mate, but his real intimacy with Longfellow did not begin until 1837, when *Twice Told Tales* was sent to the poet with the author's compliments. The book was promptly reviewed by Long-

fellow in the *North American Review*, and from that time until the romancer's death, the friendship of poet and novelist remained unbroken and leal. Their correspondence is quite among the best things in the book. Many bright letters are published. Hawthorne seems to have opened his heart to his friend, and whether despondent or happy, he told him all. 'As to my literary efforts,' he writes gloomily on one occasion, 'I do not think much of them : neither is it worth while to be ashamed of them. They would have been better, I trust, if written under more favourable circumstances. If my writings had made any decided impression, I should probably have been stimulated to greater exertions. But there has been no warmth of approbation, so that I have always written with benumbed fingers. I have another great difficulty in the lack of materials, for I have seen so little of the world that I have nothing but thin air to concoct my stories of ; and it is not easy to give a life-

like semblance to such shadowy stuff.' But Hawthorne often talked in this strain of his literary performances. He was always in doubt, always fearful of their success, and he never quite understood his own power and genius. Longfellow's friendly notice in the *Review* sent him into ecstasies, and he wrote to the poet :—' Whether or no, the public will agree with the praise which you bestowed on me, there are at least five persons who think you the most sagacious critic on earth, viz., my mother and two sisters, my old maiden aunt, and finally—the sturdiest believer of the whole—my own self. If I doubt the sincerity of any of my critics, it shall be those who censure me. Hard would be the lot of the poor scribbler if he may not have this privilege.' *The Scarlet Letter*, Longfellow pronounced 'a most tragic tragedy,' *The House of Seven Gables*, he called 'a weird wild book, like all he writes, with passages and pages of extremest beauty,' and of the *Marble Faun*, published in England by the

title of *Transformation*, he wrote, 'a wonderful book ; but with the dull pain that runs through all Hawthorne's writings.'

Longfellow's intimacy with Emerson was thoroughly sweet. There is much about the latter in the Journals and Letters. In the entry March 8, 1838, we note these words about the Concord Seer's lecturing on the Affections. 'He mistakes his power somewhat, and at times speaks in oracles, darkly. He is vastly more of a poet than a philosopher. He has a brilliant mind, and develops, and expands an idea very beautifully, and with abundant similitudes and illustrations. Jeremiah Mason said a sharp thing the other day when asked whether he could understand Mr. Emerson. His answer was : " No, I can't ; but my daughters can ! " '

Longfellow thought Emerson one of the finest lecturers he had ever heard, 'with magnificent passages of true prose-poetry. But it is all *dreamery* after all.' Eight years

afterwards he went to hear the lecture on Goethe, which he thought very good, but not so pre-eminent as some of his discourses. 'There is a great charm about him—the Chrysostom and Sir Thomas Browne of the day.' Emerson took tea with him ten days after these words were written, and this is what is recorded in the journal:—'He was rather shy in his manner, but pleasant and friendly. We all drove down to hear him lecture on Napoleon. Very good and well spoken. We like Emerson—his beautiful voice, deep thought, and mild melody of language.' Of the lecture on Inspiration, Longfellow says, under date January, 1849:

'Another of Emerson's wonderful lectures. The subject "Inspiration," the lecture itself an illustration of the theme. Emerson is like a beautiful portico in a lovely scene of nature. We stand expectant, waiting for the high priest to come forth, and lo, there comes a gentle wind from the portal, swelling and subsiding, and the blossoms and the vine leaves shake, and far away down the green



fields the grasses bend and wave, and we ask when will the high priest come forth and reveal to us the truth? And the disciples say, "he is already gone forth, and is yonder in the meadows." "And the truth he was to reveal?" "It is nature : nothing more."

Emerson's poems are thus noticed in the diary, December 26, 1846 :

'Received from Emerson a copy of his poems. F. read it to me all the evening and until late at night. It gave us the keenest pleasure, for though many of the pieces present themselves sphinx-like, and "struggling to get free their hinder parts" they offer a very bold front, and challenge your answer. Throughout the volume, through the golden mist and sublimation of fancy gleam bright veins of purest poetry like rivers running through meadows. Truly a rare volume, with many exquisite poems in it, among which I should single out "Monadnoc," "Threnody," "The Humble Bee," as containing much of the quintessence of poetry.'

There are four interesting letters from the philosopher to the poet, all of them in a highly complimentary vein and excessively

literary in form. 'Kavenagh' pleased Emerson exceedingly though the temperate conclusion caused him a little disappointment. Of *Hiawatha* he writes more fully, saying :

'I have always one foremost satisfaction in reading your books—that I'm safe. I am in variously skilful hands, but first of all they are safe hands. However, I find this Indian poem very wholesome; sweet and wholesome as maize; very proper and pertinent for us to read, and showing a kind of manly sense of duty in the poet to write. The dangers of the Indians are that they are really savage, have poor, small, sterile heads, no thoughts; and you must deal very roundly with them, and find them in brains. And I blamed your tenderness now and then as I read in accepting a legend or a song when they had so little to give. I should hold you to your creative functions on such occasions. But the costume and machinery on the whole is sweet and melancholy, and agrees with the American landscape. And you have the distinction of opening your own road. You may well call it an Indian Edda. My boy finds it like the story of Thor. I found in the last cantos a pure gleam or two of blue sky, and learned thence to tax the rest of the poem as too abstemious.'

'Hiawatha' was severely criticised by the reviewers, some of them dealing with the work in a fierce and furious fashion which reminded the author of the days when 'Hyperion' first appeared. But Bancroft, Prescott, Bayard Taylor, Hawthorne, Fields, and many other literary men praised it, and their generous words seemed to solace the poet.

Whittier does not appear in the book often, though he is mentioned in kindly terms whenever referred to. Longfellow's poems on slavery won his heart, and as before stated, he tried to induce him to enter politics on behalf of the cause they both supported. But 'partisan warfare,' wrote Longfellow in response to the appeal, 'becomes too violent, too vindictive for my taste, and I should be found but a weak and unworthy champion in public debate.' A pleasant paragraph in the journal on December 4, 1857, says 'met Whittier at the publisher's. He grows milder

and mellow as does his poetry.' Lowell was Longfellow's near neighbour in Cambridge, his successor at Harvard, and lifelong friend. The references to him, which we find in the diary are scant and tantalizingly brief. When Longfellow was engaged in the final revision of his translation of Dante, Prof. Lowell's services were constantly in requisition. The Dante Club, composed of Lowell, Charles Eliot Norton, then Professor of the History of Art at Harvard, and Mr. Longfellow used to meet once a week at Craigie House. A canto would be read from the proof sheet. 'We paused,' says Norton, 'over every doubtful passage, discussed the various readings, considered the true meaning of obscure words and phrases, sought for the most exact equivalent of Dante's expression, objected, criticised, praised with a freedom that was made perfect by Mr. Longfellow's absolute sweetness, simplicity and modesty ; and by the entire confidence which existed between us.' Longfellow performed

his task—a real labour of love,— with perfect sympathy. While at work, he wrote to a friend, ‘ how different from the gossip is the divine Dante with which I begin the morning. It is the first thing I do—the morning prayer, the keynote of the day.’

James T. Fields, the poet’s publisher and friend, is frequently alluded to, and charming letters appear at intervals. Fields was a delightful man, genial in disposition and as full of tenderness as a woman, generous to a fault in all his dealings with authors, and admirable in every relation of life. When he died in 1881, Longfellow wrote in his memory, ‘ Auf Wiedersehen ’—till we meet again. We see something of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes in these volumes, but the editor might easily have given us more of the gentle ‘ Autocrat.’ Many letters passed between the poets, and books were often exchanged between them. Of Tennyson too, we find very little. Longfellow spent two

days with the Laureate at his home in the Isle of Wight, but of his impressions he says nothing. 'Enid' and 'Guinevere' he admired greatly, and thought the former superior to the latter. The 'Princess,' he read with satisfaction; the 'Idylls,' he 'devoured.'

Longfellow managed to see a good deal of Thackeray when the satirist visited America on his lecturing tour in 1852-3, though he seems to have become more friendly with Dickens, and Clough he 'liked exceedingly.' Lowell gave a supper to Thackeray on the 5th of January, 1853, the guests invited to meet him being Felton, Clough, Dana, Dr. Parsons, Fields, Edmund Quincy, Estes Howe, and Longfellow. They sat down at ten, and did not leave the table till one. 'Very gay, with stories and jokes,' is the comment.

'Will you take some port?' said Lowell to Thackeray.

'I dare drink anything that becomes a man.'

'It will be a long while before that becomes a man.'

'Oh no,' cried Felton, '*it is fast turning into one.*'

The journal continues, 'As we were going away, Thackeray said, "We have stayed too long." "I should say," replied the host, "*one* long and too short,—a dactylic supper."' There is much pleasant matter about Dickens, whom the poet found always congenial. As early as 1842, he described him to his father as 'a glorious fellow,' 'a gay, free and easy character; with a fine bright face, blue eyes, and long dark hair.' This friendship lasted nearly thirty years, and many letters were exchanged. In those printed here, there are some interesting allusions to Dickens' American books, the *Notes* which created such a storm, and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Landor gave Longfellow a dinner, but the latter thought his host 'a rather ferocious critic.' Thomas Campbell, whom he met at Samuel Rogers', disappoint-

ed him, so far as his outward man was concerned. 'He is small and shrunk, frost-nipped by unkindly age, and wears a foxy wig. But I liked his inward man exceedingly. He is simple, frank, cordial, and withal very sociable.' Freiligrath figures often in the *Life*, and the letters to and from him are deeply interesting and bright. Jules Janin, Longfellow visited in 1842, at Paris. The famous critic asked him to dine, and he found him dressed in a green coat and light trousers. 'At dinner, we had his wife, a pretty woman, and her mother, and a silent lawyer, whose name I did not hear, not being introduced. After dinner we had whist, and I came away after a three hours' visit. Janin is a merry, nonchalant, easy person; evidently having no sympathies, yet very happy in his own little world. He dislikes the society of literary men; says he never sees them, and never wants to see them. While we were at dinner an author of dramatic pieces was shown in. Janin received him



quite cavalierly, did not ask him to take a glass of wine, nor to sit down, which he did without being asked.'

Of course there are many allusions to Charles Sumner, George S. Hilliard, Motley, Sam Ward, George W. Greene, and Prof. Ticknor, and the journals are full of brief references to the men, women and books of Longfellow's time.

Many of the better known poems have a history, and the editor explains the conditions under which some of them were written. These details are often curious, and seldom uninteresting. Under date March 15, 1838, we read, 'I always stop on the bridge ; tide waters are beautiful. From the ocean up into the land they go like messengers to ask why the tribute has not been paid. The brooks and rivers answer that there has been little harvest of snow and rain this year.' On Oct. 18, same year, we find, 'This is a glorious autumn day. The

coat of arms of the dying year hangs on the forest wall—as the hatchment on the walls of a nobleman's house in England, when he dies.' The 'Psalm of Life,' which was constructed on German models, was composed 'one bright summer morning hastily, upon the blank portion of a note of invitation.' The poet's heart was full, and he kept the poem by him for some months, before he gave it to the world. It was a voice from his very soul, and he could not send it out then, for his own heart was bleeding over a private grief. The Psalm produced a marked impression on the popular mind. Sumner knew of a class-mate who was saved from suicide by reading it. As late as the time of the Franco-German war, General Meredith Read relates this incident:

'In the midst of the siege of Paris, a venerable man presented himself to me, bowed with grief. He said, "I am Monsieur R., Procureur-Général of the Cour de Cassation. I have just learned that my son has been arrest-

ed by the German authorities at Versailles on an entirely unfounded charge. He is to be sent to a German fortress, and may be condemned to death. I am here alone and helpless. I feel that my mind will give way if I cannot find occupation ; can you tell me of some English book which I can translate into French ! ” I promised to do so and he left me. Within an hour or two, however, I received a line from him saying that he had found what he required. A few days afterwards he came again to see me ; but now erect, his face bright with hope, his voice clear and strong. He said, “ I have been translating Longfellow’s Psalm of Life, and I am a new man ; I feel that my mind is saved, and that faith and hope have taken the place of despair. I owe it all to Longfellow ! ” ’

The ‘ Beleagured City ’ was suggested to the poet by a volume of Scott’s *Border Minstrelsy*, which he had found in his friend Ward’s library. He opened it at one of the notes recalling the tradition about the city of Prague : ‘ similar to this was the “ Nacht Lager,” a midnight camp, which seemed

nightly to beleaguer the walls of Prague, but which disappeared on the recital of certain magical words.' The 'Wreck of the Hesperus' was written in 1839: 'News of ship wrecks horrible on the coast. Twenty bodies washed ashore near Gloucester. One lashed to a piece of the wreck. There is a reef called Norman's Woe where many of these took place, among others, the schooner Hesperus. I must write a ballad upon this.' And he did. As the poet sat musing, and smoking his pipe, about midnight, the wreck of the Hesperus came sailing into his mind. He jotted down some lines, then went to bed, but he could not sleep. He got up and wrote the ringing verses, the clock striking three when his task was done. The 'Skeleton in Armour' appeared in 1849. The vision encountered him as he was riding along the beach at New Port, on a summer's afternoon. A short time before a skeleton had been dug up at Fall River, clad in broken and corroded armour. It made a profound

impression on the poet, who connected the skeleton with the round tower, usually known to the people living in the vicinity as the old wind mill. These materials formed the theme of his ballad. 'Excelsior' owes its origin to accident. The poet happened to see the word on a torn piece of newspaper, one autumn night in 1841. It at once fired his imagination, and there sprang up in his mind 'the picture of a youth scaling the Alpine Pass, bearing in his hand—surely not the broad trailing banner with which the 'illustrators' have furnished him, but rather some slender pennant affixed to his alpenstock, sufficient to bear his chosen motto. This, the poet, made a symbol of the aspiration and sacrifice of a nobly ideal soul, whose words and aim are an unknown tongue to the multitude; and who, refusing to listen to the cautions of experience or prudence, or to the pleadings of home affections, of woman's love, or of formal religion, presses on to a higher goal. That goal he does not per-

fectly attain in this life, but in dying still presses on to a higher beyond. The Latinity of the motto was questioned by some of the poet's friends at the time, and afterwards by critics, who thought it should be either *excelsius* or *ad excelsiora*. He at first thought *excelsior* justified by good Latin usage, but finding that this was not really the case, he explained it more satisfactorily as part of the phrase '*Scopus meus excelsior est*'—my goal is higher. In truth he was not responsible for the borrowed Latin; and evidently the word *excelsior* was the word the poem needed, he wrote the lines on a slip of paper, which happened to be the back of a letter received that day from Charles Sumner. The 'Old Clock on the Stairs,' begun 12th November, 1845, was based on the remarkable sermon preached by Jacques Bridaine, the French missionary at St. Sulpice in Paris, in 1754. Eternity was compared to the pendulum of a clock, which ceaselessly murmured '*Toujours, jamais*,

*jamais, toujours.*' The charming lyric,—quite in Longfellow's best vein,—'The Arrow and the Song,' came to him as he stood with his back to the fire, one day before church time. Asked to write an ode on the introduction of Cochituate water into Boston, he declined, but made the following entry into his journal :

Cochituate water, it is said,  
Tho' introduced in pipes of lead,  
Will not prove deleterious ;  
But if the stream of Helicon  
Thro' leaden pipes be made to run,  
The effect is very serious.

The poet's last visit to Europe was made in 1868-9. He visited the lovely English lakes in that sweetest of all months, June, then went to Cambridge as the guest of the master of Gonville and Caius College, and on the 16th he was publicly admitted to the honorary degree of LL.D. Arriving in London on the 26th of June, he was soon the recipient of a flood of hospitality ; calls, cards, invita-

tions, letters of welcome flowed in on him. He breakfasted with Mr. Gladstone, Sir Henry Holland, the Duke of Argyll ; lunched with Lord John Russell at Richmond, dined with various hosts, received midnight calls from Bulwer and Aubrey de Vere. Through Lady Augusta Stanley came an invitation that the Queen would be sorry to have Mr. Longfellow pass through England without her meeting him, and a day was named for his visit to Windsor. The Queen received him cordially, and without ceremony in one of the galleries of the court. He also called by request, on the Prince of Wales. Many distinguished men entertained him, and his visit became a real ovation. After a brief tour through Europe, he returned to London, then a day at Oxford where he received the degree of D.C.L., followed by a journey through Devonshire, and then to Edinburgh, the Scottish lakes, and the Burns region,—the whole tour occupying eighteen months.

After Mr. Longfellow's return home, his



journals grew briefer, and his letters shrank more and more into notes. The editor gives very few of these after 1870, and the concluding pages of the *Life* treat of men and circumstances in the briefest fashion. Some of the more notable visitors of the poet are named, but little of interest seems to have been connected with their visit, though among the number were Thomas Hughes, Anthony Trollope, Wilkie Collins, Charles Kingsley, Dean Stanley, Lord and Lady Dufferin, Lords Houghton and Ronald Gower, the Duke of Argyll and Salvini. The Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro, dined at Craigie House, and named the guests he wanted to meet. They were Agassiz, Holmes, Emerson, and Lowell. Ole Bull, at the close of 1879, came from Norway, to spend the winter at Mr. Lowell's house, and often delighted Longfellow with his music. Other visitors he had, many of them bores, who robbed him of his precious hours, and plagued him for autographs.

In January, 1870, he began a second series of the 'Tales of a Wayside Inn.' In May he prepared a supplement to the *Poets and Poetry of Europe*, making for it several new translations of his own. In November, same year, he is writing the 'Divine Tragedy,' the long-contemplated, long-postponed first part of the Christus Trilogy. This caused him many doubts and hesitations, but it was published in December, 1871. Immediately after this he began the drama 'Judas Maccabeus,' a tragic subject, 'but it has unity and a catastrophe to end with.' Twenty years before, he had noted it as a possible subject. In eleven days the work was completed. In the early part of 1872 he was engaged in preparing notes for the 'Michael Angelo.' The drama was finished in its first form in sixteen days, but he kept it by him, as was his habit, for additions and changes, and it was not given to the world until after his death, ten years from the time that he had begun it. 'Three Books of Song' and 'After-

math,' appeared in 1872-3. On the 4th of January, he read to Mr. Fields 'The Hanging of the Crane'—a delightful picture of simple domestic life. The proprietor of a New York story paper paid him three thousand dollars for the right to print it in his journal; and later, it appeared in a volume illustrated by Mary Hallock (Foote). In the autumn of the next year, the 'Masque of Pandora' followed, containing the important poem of 'Morituri Salutamus.' 'Keramos,'—a poem on a potter's wheel—was first published in *Harper's Magazine*, the publishers paying one thousand dollars for it, and subsequently it appeared in a volume (1878.)

The biographer mentions an incident in connection with Longfellow's poem on Burns, written in 1880, which may amuse the reader. After the lines were published, two letters reached the poet from Scotland, on the same day. One gratefully thanked him for his 'wonderful verses, which will touch

the heart of every true Scotsman.' The other warned him that his poem was 'an effort to hold fellowship and friendly intercourse with one in the place of eternal woe.' The ground of this extraordinary statement, says Samuel Longfellow, being a rather questionable story that Burns, when on his death-bed, having been urged 'to express his trust in Christ,' had replied, 'In a hundred years men will be worshipping me.' 'This prophecy,' adds the Scottish correspondent, 'is being fulfilled in many quarters. Your poem is an instance of it.' 'Ultima Thule,' published in 1880, was the last volume issued under the poet's eye. Of the verses in this book, writes Mr. Lowell, 'never was your hand firmer.'

But towards the close of 1881, intimate friends of the poet noticed that he was in failing health, though few thought that the end was near. At Christmas, he was well enough to go to Boston, and the day after

he wrote a sonnet addressed to his books, in which he compares himself, as he looked at them on his study walls, to an old knight looking at the arms which he can no longer wield :—

‘So I behold those books upon their shelf,—  
My ornaments and arms of other days,  
Not wholly useless, though no longer used ;  
For they remind me of my other self,  
Younger and stronger, and the pleasant  
ways  
In which I walked, now clouded and confused.’

On his 75th birthday he looked cheerful, and appeared to be feeling well. A few days afterwards, on the 18th of March, however, he grew seriously ill, and suffered severely from peritonitis, the immediate cause of which was a chill. On the 24th inst., he sank quietly in death, closing a beautiful life, which was full of sweetness, flower, and fruit.

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## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

(*The Arena, Boston, Mass., October, 1891.*)

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With loving breath of all the winds, his name  
Is blown about the world ; but to his friends  
A sweeter secret hides behind his fame,  
And love steals shyly through the loud acclaim  
To murmur a *God bless you !* and there ends.

WHEN Longfellow had reached his sixtieth year, James Russell Lowell then in his splendid prime, sent him those lines as a birthday greeting. Lowell, since then, received in his turn, many similar tributes of affection, but none that seemed to speak so promptly from the heart as those touching words of love to an old friend. To himself they might well have been applied in all truthfulness and sincerity. Of the famous group of New England singers, that gave

strength and reality to American letters, but three names survived until the other day, when, perhaps the greatest of them all passed away. Whittier \* and Holmes remain, but Lowell, the younger of the three, and from whom so much was still expected, is no more to gladden, to delight, to enrich, and to instruct the age in which he occupied so eminent a place. Bryant was the first to go, and then Longfellow was called. Emerson followed soon after, and now it is Lowell's hand which has dropped forever the pen. At first his illness did not cause much uneasiness, but those near him soon began to observe indications of the great change that was going on. At the last, dissolution was not slow in coming, and death relieved the patient of his sufferings in the early hours of Wednesday, August 12th, 1891. Practically, however, it was conceded that his life-work

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\* John Greenleaf Whittier died on Wednesday, September 7th, 1892, at Hampton Falls, N.H.

had been completed a few months ago, when his publishers presented the reading world with his writings in ten sumptuous volumes, six containing the prose works, and the other four the poems and satires. He was, with the single exception of Matthew Arnold, the foremost critic of his time. Everything he said was well said. The jewels abounded on all sides. His adroitness, his fancy, his insight, his perfect good-humour, and his rare scholarship and delicate art, emphasize themselves on every page of his books. His political and literary addresses were models of what those things should be. They were often graceful and epigrammatic, but always sterling in their value and full of thought. Long ago he established his claim to the title of poet, and as the years went by, his muse grew stronger, richer, fresher, and more original. As an English critic, writing pleasantly of him and his work, in the *London Spectator*, said lately: "His books are delightful reading, with no monotony except a mon-



otony of brilliance which an occasional lapse into dulness would almost diversify."

James Russell Lowell was descended from a notable ancestry. His father was a clergyman, the pastor of the West Church in Boston. His mother was a woman of fine mind, a great lover of poetry, and mistress of several languages. From her, undoubtedly, the gifted son inherited his taste for *belles-lettres* and foreign tongues. He was born at Cambridge, Mass., on the 22nd of February, 1819, and named after his father's maternal grandfather, Judge James Russell. After spending a few years at the town school, under Mr. William Wells, a famous teacher in his day, he entered Harvard University, and in 1838 was graduated. He wrote the class poem of the year, and took up the study of law. But the latter he soon relinquished for letters. His first book was a small collection of verse intituled: "A Year's Life." It gave indication of what followed. There

were traces of real poetry in the volume, and none who read it doubted the poet's future success in his courtship of the muse. In 1843 he tried magazine publishing, his partner in the venture being Robert Carter. Three numbers only of *The Pioneer, a Literary and Critical Magazine*, were published, and though it contained contributions by Hawthorne, Lowell, Poe, Dwight, Neal, Mrs. Browning, and Parsons, it failed to make its way, and the young editor prudently withdrew it. In the next year he published the "Legend of Brittany, Miscellaneous Poems and Sonnets." A marked advance in his art was immediately noticed. His lyrical strength, his passion, his terse vocabulary, his exquisite fancy and tenderness illumined every page, giving it dignity and colour. The legend reminded the reader of an Old World poem, and "Prometheus" too, might have been written abroad. "Rhœcus" was cast in the Greek mold, and told the story, very beautifully and very artistically,

of the wood-nymph and the bee. But there were other poems in the collection, such as "To Perdita Singing," "The Heritage," and "The Forlorn," which at once caught the ear of lovers of true melody. A volume of prose essays succeeded this book. It was intitled: "Conversations on some of the Old Poets," and when Mr. Lowell became Mr. Longfellow's successor in the chair of modern languages and *belles-lettres* at Harvard, much of this material was used in his lectures to the students. But, later on, we will concern ourselves more directly with the author's prose.

In December, 1844, Mr. Lowell espoused the hand of Miss Maria White, of Watertown. She was a lady of gentle character, and a poet of singular grace. The marriage was a most happy one, and it was to her that many of the love poems of Lowell were inscribed. Once he wrote :—

" A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,  
A lily-bud not opened quite,  
That hourly grew more pure and white,

By morning, and noon-tide, and evening  
nursed :

In all of Nature thou had'st thy share ;

Thou wast waited on

By the wind and sun ;

The rain and the dew for thee took care ;

It seemed thou never could'st be more fair."

She died on the 27th of October, 1853, the  
day that a child was born to Mr. Longfellow.

The latter's touching and perfect poem,

"The Two Angels," refers to this death and  
birth :—

"'T was at thy door, O friend ! and not at mine,

The angel with the amaranthine wreath,

Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,

Whispered a word that had a sound like  
death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,

A shadow on those features fair and thin ;

And softly, from that hushed and darkened  
room,

Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God ! If he but wave His hand,

The mists collect, the rain falls thick and  
loud,

Till with a smile of light on sea and land,

Lo ! He looks back from the departing  
cloud."

A privately printed volume of Mrs. Lowell's poems appeared a year or two after her death. Mr. Lowell's second wife was Miss Frances Dunlap, of Portland, Maine, whom he married in September, 1837. She died in February, 1885.

Mr. Lowell was ever pronounced in his hatred of wrong, and naturally enough he was found on the side of Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Whittier, in their great battle against that huge blot on civilization, slavery in America. He spoke and wrote in behalf of the abolitionists at a time when the anti-slavery men were openly despised as heartily in the North as they were feared and detested in the South. He wrote with a pen which never faltered, and satire, irony, and fierce invective accomplished their work with a will, and moved many a heart, almost despairing, to renewed energy.

"The Vision of Sir Launfal" was published in 1848, and it will be read as long as men and women admire tales of chivalry and

the stirring stories of King Arthur's court. Tennyson's "Idyls" will keep his fame alive and Lowell's *Sir Launfal*, which tells of the search for the Holy Grail, the cup from which Christ drank when he partook of the last supper with his disciples, will also have a place among the best of the Arthurian legends. It is said that Mr. Lowell wrote this strong poem in forty-eight hours, during which he hardly slept or ate. Stedman calls it "a landscape poem," a term amply justified. It contains many quotable extracts, such as, "And what is so rare as a day in June," "Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak, from the snow five thousand summers old," and "Earth gets its price for what earth gives us." We are constantly meeting these in the magazines and in the newspapers. *The Vision* did much to bring about a larger recognition of the author's powers as a poet of the first order. He had to wait some time to gain this, and in that respect he resembled Robert Browning, at

first so obscure, at last compelling approval from all.

The field of American literature, as it existed in 1848, was surveyed by Lowell in his happiest manner, as a satirist, in that clever production, by a wonderful Quiz, *A Fable for Critics*, "Set forth in October, the 31st day, in the year '48, G. P. Putnam, Broadway." For some time the authorship remained a secret, though there were many shrewd guesses as to the paternity of the biting shafts of wit and delicately bated hooks. It was written mainly for the author's own amusement, and with no thought of publication. Daily instalments of the poem were sent off, as soon as written, to a friend of the poet, Mr. Charles F. Briggs, of New York, who found the lines so irresistibly good, that he begged permission to hand them over to Putnam's for publication. This, however, Mr. Lowell declined to do, until he found that the repeated urging of his friend would not be stayed. Then he consented to ano-

nymous publication. The secret was kept, until, as the author himself tells us, "several persons laid claim to its authorship." No poem has been oftener quoted than the Fable. It is full of audacious things. The authors of the day, and their peculiar characteristics (Lowell himself not being spared in the least), are held up to admiring audiences with all their sins and foibles exposed to the public gaze. It was intended to have "a sting in his tale," this "frail, slender thing, rhyme-winged," and it had it decidedly. Some of the authors lampooned, took the matter up, in downright sober earnest, and objected to the seat in the pillory which they were forced to occupy unwillingly. But they forgave the satirist, as the days went by, and they realized that, after all, the fun was harmless, nobody was hurt actually, and all were treated alike by the ready knife of the fabler. But what could they say to a man who thus wrote of himself?—

"There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus  
to climb



With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with  
rhyme,  
He might get on alone, spite of brambles  
and boulders,  
But he can't with that bundle he has on his  
shoulders.  
The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh  
reaching  
Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing  
and preaching;  
His lyre has some chords that would ring  
pretty well,  
But he'd rather by half make a drum of the  
shell,  
And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,  
At the head of a march to the last new  
Jerusalem."

Apart from the humorous aspect of the Fable, there is, certainly, a good deal of sound criticism in the piece. It may be brief, it may be inadequate, it may be blunt, but for all that it is truthful, and eminently just, as far as it goes. Bryant, who was called cold, took umbrage at the portrait drawn of him. But his verse has all the cold glitter of the Greek bards, despite the

fact that he is America's greatest poet of nature, and some of his songs are both sympathetic and sweet, such as the "Lines to a Water-fowl," "The Flood of Years," "The Little People of the Snow," and "Thanatopsis."

But now we come to the book which gave Mr. Lowell his strongest place in American letters, and revealed his remarkable powers as a humorist, satirist, and thinker. We have him in this work, at his very best. The vein had never been thoroughly worked before. The Yankee of Haliburton appeared ten years earlier than the creations of Lowell. But Sam Slick was a totally different person from Hosea Biglow and Birdofredum Sawin. Slick was a very interesting man, and he has his place in fiction. His sayings and doings are still read, and his wise saws continue to be pondered over. But the Biglow type seems to our mind, more complete, more rounded, more perfect, more true, indeed, to nature. The art is well proportioned all

through, and the author justifies Bungay's assumption, that he had attained the rank of Butler, whose satire heads the list of all such productions. Butler, however, Lowell really surpassed. The movement is swift, and there is an individuality about the whole performance, which stamps it undeniably as a masterpiece. The down-east dialect is managed with consummate skill, the character-drawing is superlatively fine, and the sentiments uttered, ringing like a bell, carry conviction. The invasion of Mexico was a distasteful thing to many people because it was felt that that war was dishonorable, and undertaken solely for the benefit of the slaveholder, who was looking out for new premises, where he might ply his calling, and continue the awful trade of bondage, and his dealings in flesh and blood. Mr. Lowell's heart was steeled against that expedition, and the first series of his Biglow papers, introduced to the world by the Reverend Homer Wilbur, showed how deep-

ly earnest he was, and how terribly rigorous he could be, when the scalpel had to be used. The first knowledge that the reading world had of the curious, ingenuous, and quaint Hosea, was the communication which his father, Ezekiel Biglow, sent to the *Boston Courier*, covering a poem in the Yankee dialect, by the hand of the young down-easter. It at once commanded notice. The idea was so new, the homely truths were so well put, the language in print was so unusual, and the "hits" were so well aimed, that the critics were baffled. The public took hold immediately, and it soon spread that a strong and bold pen was helping the reformers in their unpopular struggle. The blows were struck relentlessly, but men and women laughed through their indignation. There were some who rebelled at the coarseness of the satire, but all recognized that the author, whoever he might be, was a scholar, a man of thought, and a genuine philanthropist, who could not be put down. Vol-

unteers were wanted, and Boston was asked to raise her quota. But Hosea Biglow, in his charmingly scornful way said :

“ Thrash away, you’ll hev to rattle  
On them kittle-drums o’ yourn,—  
'Taint a knowin’ kind o’ cattle  
Thet is ketched with mouldy corn.

Put in stiff, you fifer feller,  
Let folks see how spry you be,—  
Guess you’ll toot till you are yaller  
'Fore you git ahold o’ me! ”

The parson adds a note, sprinkled with Latin and Greek sentences, as is his wont. The letters from the first page to the last, in the collected papers, are amazingly clever. The reverend gentleman who edits the series is a type himself, full of pedantic and pedagogic learning, anxious always to show off his knowledge of the classics, and solemn and serious ever as a veritable owl. His notes and introductions, and scrappy Latin and Greek, are among the most admirable things in the book. Their humour is delicious, and the mock criticisms and opinions of the press,

offered by Wilbur on the work of his young friend, and his magnificent seriousness, which constantly shows itself, give a zest to the performance, which lingers long on the mind. The third letter contains the often-quoted poem, "What Mr. Robinson thinks."

"Gineral C. is a drefle smart man :

He's ben on all sides that give place or  
pelf ;

But consistency still wuz a part of his plan,—

He's ben true to *one* party,—an' thet is  
himself :—

So John P.

Robinson, he

Sez he shall vote for Gineral C.

. . . . .

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life

That th' Apostles rigged out in their  
swaller tail coats,

An' marched round in front of a drum an'  
a fife,

To get some on 'em office, an' some on  
'em votes ;

But John P.

Robinson, he

Says they didn't know everything down  
in Judee."

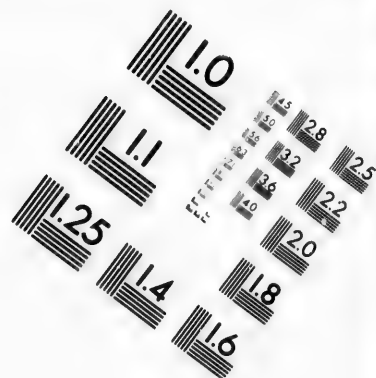
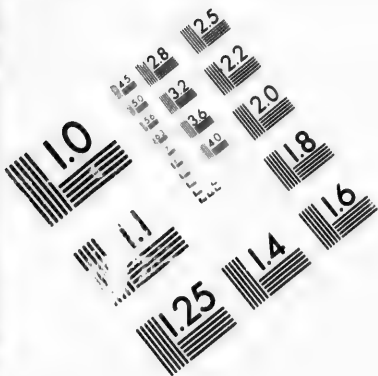
Despite the sometimes harsh criticism which the Biglow papers evoked, Mr. Lowell kept on sending them out at regular intervals, knowing that every blow struck was a blow in the cause of right, and every attack was an attack on the meannesses of the time. The flexible dialect seemed to add honesty to the poet's invective. The satire was oftentimes savage enough, but the vehicle by which it was conveyed, carried it off. There was danger that Lowell might exceed his limit, but the excess so nearly reached, never came. The Papers aroused the whole country, said Whittier, and did as much to free the slave, almost, as Grant's guns. In one of the numbers, Mr. Lowell produced, quite by accident, as it were, his celebrated poem of "The Courtin'." This was in the second series, begun in the *Atlantic Monthly*, of which he was, in 1857, one of the founders, and editor. This series was written during the time of the American Civil War, and the object was to ridicule the revolt of the

Southern States, and show up the demon of secession in its true colours. Birdofredum Sawin, now a secessionist, writes to Hosea Biglow, and the poem is, of course, introduced as usual, by the parson. The humour is more grim and sardonic, for the war was a stern reality, and Mr. Lowell felt the need of making his work tell with all the force that he could put into it. In response to a request for enough "copy" to fill out a certain editorial page, Lowell wrote rapidly down the verses which became, at a bound, so popular. He added, from time to time, other lines. This is the story of the Yankee courtship of Zekle and Huldy:—

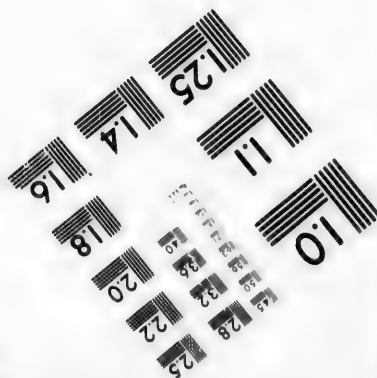
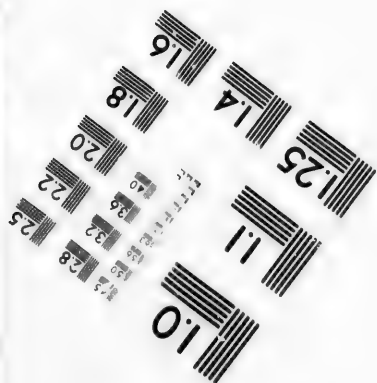
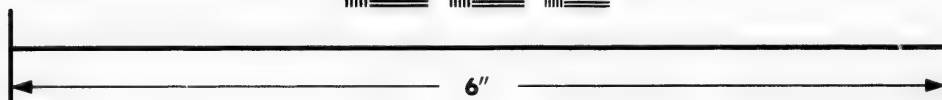
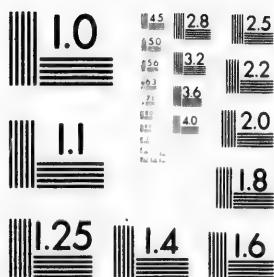
" The very room, coz she was in,  
 Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',  
 An' she looked full ez rosy agin  
 Ez the apples she was peelin'.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
 Some doubtfle o' the sekle,  
 His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,  
 But hern went pity Zekle.





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An' yit she gin her chair a jerk  
As though she wished him funder,  
An' on her apples kep' to work,  
Parin' away like murder.

' You want to see my pa, I s'pose ? '  
' Wall,—no—I come dasignin'—'  
' To see my ma ? She's sprinklin' clo's  
Agin.to-morrer's i'nin.'

To say why gals acts so or so,  
Or don't 'ould be presumin',  
Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*  
Comes natural to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
Then stood a spell on t'other,  
An' on which one he felt the wust  
He couldn't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, 'I'd better call agin ; '  
Says she, 'Think likely, mister ; '  
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,  
An'—wall, he up an' kist her.

When ma bimeby upon 'em slips,  
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,  
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips  
An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind  
Whose naturs never vary,  
Like streams that keep a summer mind  
Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued  
Too tight for all expressin'.  
Tell mother see how metters stood,  
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide  
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,  
An' all I know is they was cried  
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.'"

During the war, Great Britain sided principally with the South. This the North resented, and the Trent affair only added fuel to the flame. It was in one of the Biglow Papers that Mr. Lowell spoke to England, voicing the sentiments and feelings of the Northern people. That poem was called "Jonathan to John," and it made a great impression on two continents. It was full of the keenest irony, and though bitter, there was enough common sense in it to

make men pause, and think. It closes thus patriotically :—

“ Shall it be love, or hate, John ?  
It's you thet's to decide ;  
Ain't *your* bonds held by Fate, John,  
Like all the world's beside ?'  
Ole Uncle S. sez. he, ' I guess  
Wise men forgive,' sez he,  
“ But not forgit ; an' some time yit  
Thet truth may strike J. B.,  
Ez wal ez you an' me ! ’

“ God means to make this land, John,  
Clear thru, from sea to sea,  
Believe an' understand, John,  
The *wuth* o' bein' free.'  
Ole Uncle S. sez he, ' I guess,  
God's price is high,' sez he ;  
“ But nothin' else than wut He sells  
Wears long, an' thet J. B.  
May larn, like you an' me ! ’ ’

The work concludes with notes, a glossary of Yankee terms, and a copious index. The chapter which tells of the death of Parson Wilbur is one of the most exquisite things that Lowell has done in prose. The reader

who has followed the fortunes of the Reverend Homer, is profoundly touched by the reflection that he will see him no more. He had grown to be a real personage, and long association with him had made him a friend. On this point, Mr. Underwood relates an incident, which is worth quoting here :—

“ The thought of grief for the death of an imaginary person is not quite so absurd as it might appear. One day, while the great novel of ‘The Newcomes’ was in course of publication, Lowell, who was then in London, met Thackeray on the street. The novelist was serious in manner, and his looks and voice told of weariness and affliction. He saw the kindly inquiry in the poet’s eyes, and said, ‘Come into Evans’s and I’ll tell you all about it. *I have killed the Colonel.*’ ”

“ So they walked in and took a table in a remote corner, and then Thackeray, drawing the fresh sheets of manuscript from his breast pocket, read through that exquisitely touching chapter which records the death of Colonel Newcome. When he came to the final *Adsum*, the tears which had been

swelling his lids for some time trickled down upon his face, and the last word was almost an inarticulate sob."

The volume "Under the Willows," which contains the poems written at intervals during ten or a dozen years, includes such well-remembered favourites as "The First Snowfall," "For an Autograph," "A Winter Evening Hymn to My Fire," "The Dead House" (wonderfully beautiful it is), "The Darkened Mind," "In the Twilight," and the vigorous "Villa Franca" so full of moral strength. It appeared in 1869. Mr. Lowell's pen was always busy about this time and earlier. He was a regular contributor to the *Atlantic* in prose and verse. He was lecturing to his students and helping Longfellow with his matchless translation of Dante, besides having other irons in the fire.

It is admitted that the greatest poem of the Civil War was, by all odds, Mr. Lowell's noble Commemoration Ode. In that blood-

red struggle several of his kinsmen were slain, among them Gen. C. R. Lowell, Lieut. J. J. Lowell, and Captain Putnam, all nephews. His ode which was written in 1865, and recited July 21, at the Harvard commemoration services, is dedicated "To the ever sweet and shining memory of the ninety-three sons of Harvard College, who have died for their country in the war of nationality." It is, in every way, a great effort, and the historic occasion which called it forth will not be forgotten. The audience assembled to listen to it was very large. No hall could hold the company, and so the ringing words were spoken in the open air. Meade, the hero of Gettysburg, stood at one side, and near him were Story, poet and sculptor, fresh from Rome, and General Devens, afterwards judge, and fellows of Lowell's own class at college. The most distinguished people of the Commonwealth lent their presence to the scene. There was a hushed silence while Lowell spoke, and



when he uttered the last grand words of his ode, every heart was full, and the old wounds bled afresh, for hardly one of that vast throng had escaped the badge of mourning, for a son, or brother, or father, lost in that war.

“ Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found  
release !

Thy God, in these distempered days,  
Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His  
ways,

And through thine enemies hath wrought  
thy peace !

Bow down in prayer and praise !  
No poorest in thy borders but may now  
Lift to the juster skies a man's enfranchised  
brow.

O Beautiful ! My Country ! ours once more !  
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled  
hair

O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,  
And letting thy set lips,  
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,  
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare.

What words divine of lover or of poet  
Could tell our love and make thee know  
it,

Among the Nations bright beyond compare  
What were our lives without thee ?  
What all our lives to save thee !  
We reck not what we gave thee ;  
We will not dare to doubt thee,  
But ask whatever else, and we will dare."

"The Cathedral," dedicated most felicitously to the late James T. Fields, the author-publisher, written in 1869, was published early in the following year in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and immediately won the applause of the more thoughtful reader. It is a poem of great grandeur, suggestive in the highest degree, and rich in description and literary finish. Three memorial odes, one read at the one hundredth anniversary of the fight at Concord Bridge, one under the old elm, and one for the Fourth of July, 1876, followed. The Concord ode appears to be the more striking and brilliant of the three, but all are satisfactory specimens, measured by the standard which governs the lyric.

"Heartsease and Rue," is the graceful title of Mr. Lowell's last volume of verse.

A good many of his personal poems are included in the collection, such as his charming epistle to George William Curtis, the elegant author of "Prue and I," one of the sweetest books ever written, inscribed to Mrs. Henry W. Longfellow, in memory of the happy hours at our castles in Spain; the magnificent apostrophe to Agassiz; the birthday offering to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes; the lines to Whittier on his seventy-fifth birthday; the verses on receiving a copy of Mr. Austin Dobson's "Old World Idylls," and Fitz Adam's Story, playful, humorous and idyllic.

In his young days, Mr. Lowell wrote much for the newspapers and serials. To the *Dial*, the organ of the Transcendentalists, he contributed frequently, and his poems and prose will be found scattered through the pages of *The Democratic Review*, *The North American Review*, of which he ultimately became editor, *The Massachusetts Quarterly Review*, and the *Boston Courier*. His prose was well received

by scholars. It is terse and strong, and whatever position history may assign to him as a poet, there can never be any question about his place among the ablest essayists of his century. "Fireside Travels," the first of the brilliant series of prose works that we have, attract by their singular grace and graciousness. The picture of Cambridge thirty years ago, is full of charming reminiscences that must be very dear to Cambridge men and women. "The Moosehead Journal," and "Leaves from the Journal in Italy," happily turned, are rich in local colour. "Among My Books," and "My Study Windows," the addresses on literary and political topics, and the really able paper on Democracy, which proved a formidable answer to his critics, fill out the list of Mr. Lowell's prose contributions. The literary essays are especially well done. Keats tinged his poetry when he was quite a young man. He never lost taste of Endymion or the Grecian Urn, and his estimate of the poet, whose

"name was writ in water," is in excellent form and full of sympathy. Wordsworth, too, he read and re-read with fresh delight, and it is interesting to compare his views of the lake poet with those of Matthew Arnold. The older poets, such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, and Pope in English, and Dante in Italian, find in Mr. Lowell a penetrating and helpful critic. His analyses are made with rare skill and nice discrimination. He is never hasty in giving expression to his opinion, and every view that he gives utterance to, exhibits the process by which it reached its development. The thought grows under his hand, apparently. The paper on Pope, with whose writings he was familiar at an early age, is a most valuable one, being especially rich in allusion and in quality. He finds something new to say about the bard of Avon, and says it in a way which emphasizes its originality. Indeed, every essay is a strong presentation of what Lowell had in his mind at the time.

He is not content to confine his observation to the name before him. He enlarges always the scope of his paper, and runs afield, picking up here and there citations, and illustrating his points, by copious drafts on literature, history, scenery, and episode. He was well equipped for his task, and his wealth of knowledge, his fine scholarly taste, his remarkable grasp of everything that he undertook, his extensive reading, all within call, added to a captivating style, imparted to his writings the tone which no other essayist contemporary with him, save Matthew Arnold, was able to achieve. Thoreau and Emerson are adequately treated, and the library of old authors is a capital digest, which all may read with profit. The paper on Carlyle, which is more than a mere review of the old historian's "Frederick the Great," is a noble bit of writing, sympathetic in touch, and striking as a portrait. It was written in 1866. And then there are papers in the volumes on Lessing, Swinburne's Fra-

gedies, Rousseau, and the Sentimentalists, and Josiah Quincy, which bring out Mr. Lowell's critical acumen even stronger. Every one who has read anything during the last fifteen years or so, must remember that bright *Atlantic* essay on "A Certain Condescension in Foreigners." It is, in Mr. Lowell's serenest vein, hitting right and left skilful blows, and asserting constantly his lofty Americanism. The essay was needed. A lesson had to be given, and no better hands could have imparted it. Mr. Lowell was a master of form in literary composition,—that is in his prose, for he has been caught napping, occasionally, in his poetry,—and his difficulty was slight in choosing his words.

As a speaker he was successful. His addresses before noted gatherings in Britain and elsewhere are highly artistic. In Westminster Abbey he pronounced two, one on Dean Stanley, and the other on Coleridge, which, though brief, could scarcely be excelled, so perfect, so admirable, so dignified are they.

The same may be said of the addresses on General Garfield, Fielding, Wordsworth, and Don Quixote. Mr. Lowell on such occasions always acquitted himself gracefully. He had few gestures, his voice was sweet, and the beauty of his language, his geniality, and courteous manner drew every one towards him. He was a great student, and preacher, and teacher of reform. He was in favour of the copyright law, and did his utmost to bring it about. He worked hard to secure tariff reform, and a pet idea of his was the reformation of the American civil service system. On all these subjects he spoke and wrote to the people with sincerity and earnestness. When aroused he could be eloquent, and even in later life, sometimes, some of the fire of the early days when he fought the slaveholders and the oppressors, would burst out with its old time energy. He was ever outspoken and fearless, regardless, apparently, of consequences, so long as his cause was just.



As professor of *belles-lettres* at Harvard University, he had ample opportunity for cultivating his literary studies, and though he continued to take a lively interest always in the political changes and upheavals constantly going on about him, he never applied for office. In politics he was a Republican. His party offered him the mission to Russia, but he declined the honour. During the Hayes administration, however, when his old class-mate, General Devens, had a seat in the Cabinet, the government was more successful with him. He was tendered the post of Minister to Spain. This was in 1877, and he accepted it, somewhat half-heartedly, to be sure, for he had misgivings about leaving his lovely home at Elmwood, the house he was born in, the pride and glory of his life, the *locale* of many of his poems, the historic relic of royalist days. And then again, he did not care to leave the then unbroken circle of friends, for Dr. Holmes, John

Holmes,\* Agassiz, Longfellow, Norton, Fields, John Bartlett, Whipple, Hale, James Freeman Clarke, and others of the famous Saturday Club, he saw almost every day. And then, yet again, there was the whist club, how could he leave that ? But he was overcome, and he went to Spain, and began, among the grandees and dons, his diplomatic career. His fame had preceded him, and he knew the language and literature of Cervantes well. It was not long before he became the friend of all with whom he came into contact. But no great diplomatic work engaged his attention, for there was none to do. The Queen Mercedes died, during his term, much beloved, and Mr. Lowell wrote in her memory one of his most chaste and beautiful sonnets :—

“ Hers all that earth could promise or bestow,  
Youth, Beauty, Love, a crown, the beckon-  
ing years,

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\* One of the most genial of men, brother of the poet, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Lids never wet, unless with joyous tears,  
A life remote from every sordid woe  
And by a nation's swelled to lordlier flow.

What lurking-place, thought we, for  
doubts or fears,

When, the day's swan, she swam along  
the cheers

Of the Acalà, five happy months ago?

The guns were shouting Io Hymen then  
That, on her birthday, now denounce her  
doom;

The same white steeds that tossed their  
scorn of men

To-day as proudly drag her to the tomb.

Grim jest of fate! Yet who dare call it  
blind,

Knowing what life is, what our human-  
kind! "

In 1880, he was transferred to London, as  
"his excellency, the ambassador of American literature to the court of Shakespeare,"  
as a writer in the *Spectator* deliciously put it.  
He had a good field to work in, but, as the  
duties were light, he had ample time on his  
hands. He went about everywhere, the idol  
of all, the most engaging of men. Naturally,  
his tastes led him among scholars who in

their turn made much of him. He was asked frequently to speak, or deliver addresses and he always responded with tact. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge conferred on him their highest honours and the ancient Scottish University of Saint Andrew elected him Rector,—a rare compliment, Emerson, only, being the other citizen of the United States so marked out for academic distinction. Some of his compatriots hinted that his English life was making him un-American. Others more openly asserted that the United States Minister was fast losing the republican feelings which he took from America, and was becoming a British Conservative. The reply to those innuendoes and charges will be found in his spirited address on Democracy, which proves undeniably, his sturdy faith in American institutions, American principles, and American manhood. Mr. Lowell maintained to the letter the political and national views which had long guided his career. His admirable temper and agree-

able manner won the hearts of the people, but no effort was made to win him away from his allegiance, nor would he have permitted it had it been tried. In addition to being a great man and a well-informed statesman, he was a gentleman of culture and refinement. His gentleness and amiability may have been misconstrued by some, but be that as it may, the fact remains, he never showed weakness in the discharge of his diplomatic duties. He represented the United States in the fullest sense of the term. In 1885, he returned to America, Mr. E. J. Phelps taking his place, under President Cleveland. Though a Republican, Mr. Lowell differed from his party on the presidential candidate question. He favoured the election of the Democrat nominee. Had he been in America during the campaign, he would have been found with Mr. George William Curtis,\* and his friends, opposing

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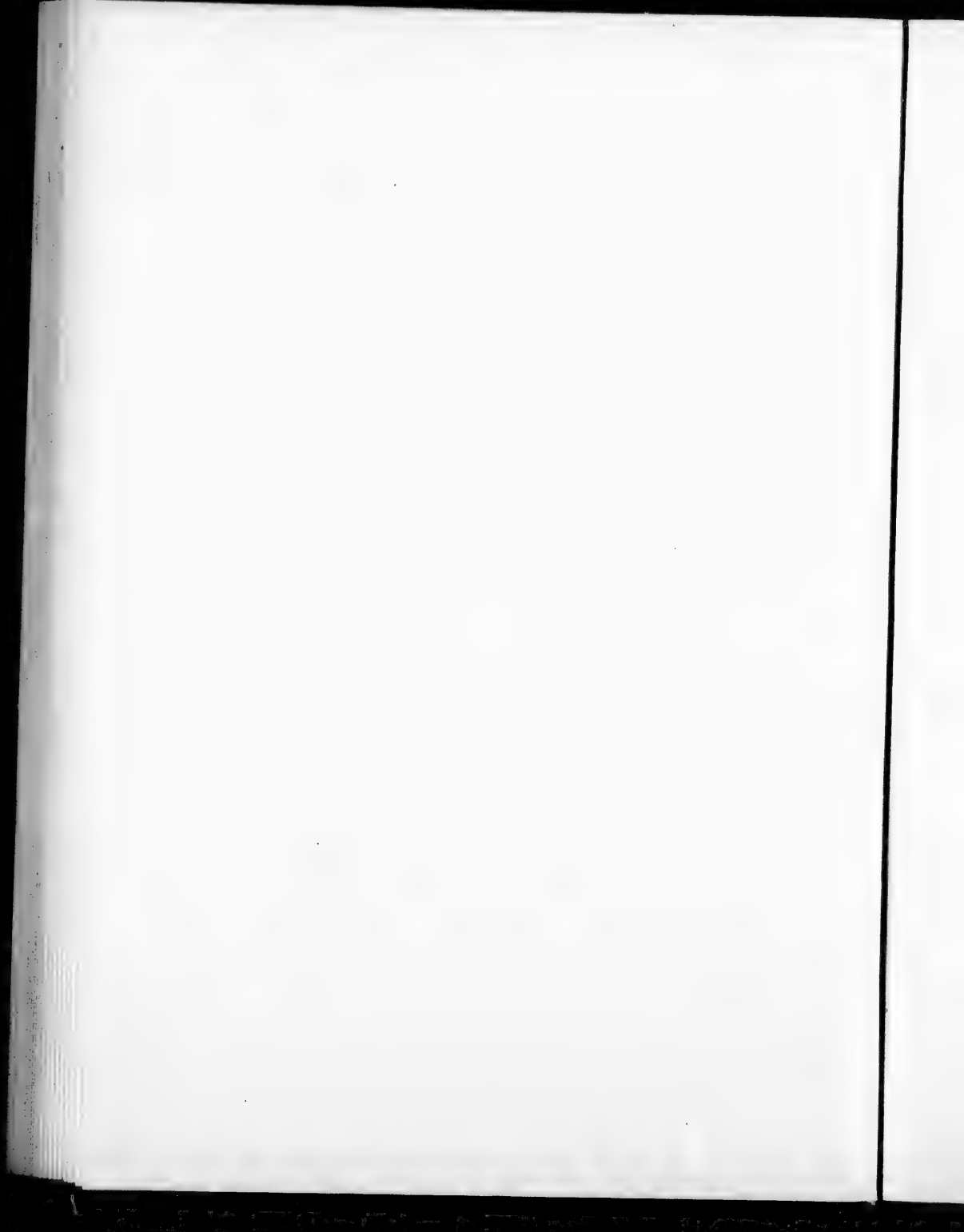
\* Mr. Curtis died at his home, at Livingston, Staten Island, New York, on Wednesday, 31st August, 1892. He was a Republican, but abandoned his party when Mr. James Gillespie Blaine was nominated.

the return of Mr. Blaine. From 1885 to the date of his death, he added little to the volume of his literary work. He spent part of his time in England, and part in the United States. A poem, a brief paper, and an address or two, came from his pen, at irregular intervals. He edited a complete edition of his writings in ten volumes, and left behind him a few papers,\* and, an unfinished biography of Hawthorne, which he was preparing for the American Men of Letters Series.

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\* *The Old English Dramatists*,—a series of papers on Marlowe, Webster, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Middleton and Ford,—written by Prof. Lowell in 1887, and delivered as lectures before the Lowell Institute, was published, under the editorship of Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, his literary executor, in *Harper's Magazine* in 1892, and subsequently in book-form, by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. Though rapidly written and never revised by their author, these essays stand out as masterly efforts in honest criticism.

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## OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

*(The Arena, Boston, Mass., July, 1891.)*

—§—

*The Gift is thine the weary world to make  
More cheerful for thy sake,  
Soothing the ears its Miserere pains,  
With the old Hellenic strains,  
Lighting the sullen face of discontent  
With smiles for blessings sent.  
Enough of Selfish wailing has been had,  
Thank God ! for notes more glad.*

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

TO the year 1809, the world is very much indebted for a band of notable recruits to the ranks of literature and science, statesmanship and military renown. One need mention only a few names to establish that fact, and grand names they are, for the list includes Darwin, Gladstone, Erastus Wilson, John Hill Burton, Manteuffel, Count Beust,



Lord Houghton, Lord Tennyson, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Each of these has played an important part in the world's history, and impressed the age with a genius that marks an epoch in the great department of human activity and progress. The year was pretty well advanced, and the month of August had reached its 29th day, when the wife of Dr. Abiel Holmes presented the author of "The American Annals" with a son who was destined to take his place in the front line of poets, thinkers, and essayists. The babe was born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the centre of a Puritan civilization, which could scarcely have been in touch and harmony with the emphasized Unitarianism emanating from Harvard. But Abiel Holmes was a genial, generous-hearted man, and despite the severity of his religious belief, contrived to live on terms of a most agreeable character with his neighbours. A Yale man himself, and the firm friend of his old professor, the president of that institu-

tion, who had given him his daughter Mary to wed (she died five years after her marriage), we may readily believe that for a time, Harvard University, then strongly under the sway of the Unitarians, had little fascination for him. But his kindly nature conquered the repugnance he may have felt, and he soon got on well with all classes of the little community which surrounded him. By his first wife he had no children. But five, three daughters and two sons, blessed his union with Sarah Wendell, the accomplished daughter of the Hon. Oliver Wendell, of Boston. We may pass briefly over the early years of Oliver Wendell Holmes. He was educated at the Phillips Academy at Exeter, and subsequently entered Harvard University, where he was graduated, with high honours, in 1829, and belonged to that class of young fellows who, in after life, greatly distinguished themselves. Some of his noblest poems were written in memory of that class, such as "Bill and Joe," "A

Song of Twenty-nine," "The Old Man Dreams," "Our Sweet Singer," and "Our Banker," all of them breathing love and respect for the boys with whom the poet studied and matriculated. Young Holmes was destined for the law, but Chitty and Blackstone apparently had little charm for him, for after a year's trial, he abandoned the field and took up medicine. His mind could not have been much impressed with statutes, for all the time that he was supposed to be conning over abstruse points in jurisprudence, he was sending to the printers some of the cleverest and most waggish contributions which have fallen from his pen. The *Collegian*,—the university journal of those days,—published most of these, and though no name was attached to the screeds, it was fairly well known that Holmes was the author. The companion writers in the *Collegian* were Simmons, who wrote over the signature of "Lockfast;" John O. Sargent, poet and essayist, whose *nom de plume* was

"Charles Sherry"; Robert Habersham, the "Mr. Airy" of the group; and that clever young trifler, Theodore Snow, who delighted the readers of the periodical with the works of "Geoffrey La Touche." Of these, of course, Holmes was the life and soul, and though sixty years have passed away since he enriched the columns of the *Collegian* with the fruits of his muse, more than half of the pieces survive, and are deemed good enough to hold a place beside his maturer productions. "Evening by a Tailor," "The Meeting of Dryads," and "The Spectre Pig,"—the latter in the vein of Tom Hood at his best,—will be remembered as among those in the collection which may be read to-day with the zest, appreciation, and delight which they inspired more than half a century ago. Holmes' connection with the *Collegian* had a most inspiring effect on his fellow contributors, who found their wits sharpened by contact with a mind that was forever buoyant and overflowing with humour and good

nature. In friendly rivalry, those kindred intellects vied with one another, and no more brilliant college paper was ever published than the *Collegian*, and this is more remarkable still, when we come to consider the fact, that at that time, literature in America was practically in its infancy. Nine years before, Sydney Smith had asked his famous question, "Who reads an American book? who goes to an American play?" And to that query there was really no answer. Six numbers of the *Collegian* were issued, and they must have proved a revelation to the men and women of that day, whose reading, hitherto, had almost been confined to the imported article from beyond the seas, for Washington Irving wrote with the pen of an English gentleman, Bryant and Dana had not yet made their mark in distinctively American authorship, and Cooper's "Prairie" was just becoming to be understood by the critics and people.

Shaking the dust of the law office from

his shoes, Oliver Wendell Holmes, abandoning literature for a time, plunged boldly into the study of a profession for which he had always evinced a strong predilection. The art and practice of medical science had ever a fascination for him, and he made rapid progress at the university. Once or twice he yielded to impulse, and wrote a few bright things, anonymously, for the *Harbinger*,—the paper which Epes Sargent and Park Benjamin published for the benefit of a charitable institution, and dedicated as a May gift to the ladies who had aided the New England Institution for the Education of the Blind. In 1833, Holmes sailed for Paris, where he studied medicine and surgery, and walked the hospitals. Three years were spent abroad, and then the young student returned to Cambridge to take his medical degree at Harvard, and to deliver his metrical Essay on Poetry, before the Phi-Beta-Kappa Society. In this year too, 1836, he published his first acknowledged

book of poems,—a duodecimo volume of less than two hundred pages. In this collection his Essay on Poetry appeared. It describes the art in four stages, *viz.*, the Pastoral or Bucolic, the Martial, the Epic, and the Dramatic. In illustration of his views, he furnished exemplars from his own prolific muse, and his striking poem of “Old Ironsides” was printed for the first time, and sprang at a bound into national esteem. And in this first book, there was included that little poem, “The Last Leaf,” better work than which Holmes has never done. It is in a vein which he has developed much since then. Grace, humour, pathos, and happiness of phrase and idea, are all to be found in its delicious stanzas :—

I saw him once before,  
As he passed by the door,  
And again  
The pavement stones resound,  
As he totters o'er the ground  
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,  
Ere the pruning-knife of Time  
Cut him down,  
Not a better man was found  
By the Crier on his round  
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,  
And he looks at all he meets,  
Sad and wan ;  
And he shakes his feeble head,  
That it seems as if he said,  
“ They are gone ! ”

The mossy marbles rest  
On the lips that he has prest  
In their bloom,  
And the names he loved to hear  
Have been carved for many a year  
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—  
Poor old lady, she is dead  
Long ago—  
That he had a Roman nose,  
And his cheek was like a rose  
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,  
And it rests upon his chin  
Like a staff ;



And a crook is in his back,  
And a melancholy crack  
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin  
For me to sit and grin  
At him here ;  
But the old three-cornered hat,  
And the breeches, and all that,  
Are so queer !

And if I should live to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the spring,  
Let them smile as I do now,  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling.

In 1838, Doctor Holmes accepted his first professorial position, and became professor of anatomy and physiology at Dartmouth. Two years later, he married, and took up the practice of medicine in Boston. In 1847, he returned to his old love, accepting the Parkman professorship of anatomy and physiology, in the Medical School at Harvard. While engaged in teaching, he prepared for publication several important books and

reports relating to his profession, and his papers in the various medical journals attracted great attention by their freshness, clearness, and originality. But it is not as a medical man that Doctor Holmes may be discussed in this paper. We have to deal altogether with his literary career,—a career, which for its brilliancy has not been surpassed on this side of the Atlantic.

As a poet he differs much from his contemporaries, but the standard he has reached is as high as that which has been attained by Lowell and Longfellow. In lofty verse he is strong and unconventional, writing always with a firm grasp on his subject, and emphasizing his perfect knowledge of melody and metre. As a writer of occasional verse he has not had an equal in our time, and his pen for threescore years has been put to frequent use in celebration of all sorts of events, whether military, literary, or scientific. Bayard Taylor said, "He lifted the 'occasional' into the 'classic,'" and the

phrase happily expresses the truth. The vivacious character of his nature readily lends itself to work of this sort, and though the printed page gives the reader the sparkling epigram and the graceful lines, clear-cut always and full of soul, the pleasure is not quite the same as seeing and hearing him recite his own poems, in the company of congenial friends. His songs are full of sunshine and heart, and his literary manner wins by its simplicity and tenderness. Years ago, Miss Mitford said that she knew no one so thoroughly original. For him she could find no living prototype. And so she went back to the time of John Dryden to find a man to whom she might compare him. And Lowell in his "Fable for Critics," describes Holmes as

"A Leyden-jar full-charged, from which flit  
The electrical tingles of hit after hit."

His lyrical pieces are among the best of his compositions, and his ballads, too few in number, betray that love which he has al-

ways felt for the melodious minstrelsy of the ancient bards. Whittier thought that the "Chambered Nautilus" was "booked for immortality." In the same list may be put the "One-Hoss Shay," "Contentment," "Destination," "How the Old Horse Won the Bet," "The Broomstick Train," and that lovely family portrait, "Dorothy Quincy," a poem with a history. Dorothy Quincy's picture, cold and hard, painted by an unknown artist, hangs on the wall of the poet's home in Beacon Street. A hole in the canvas marks the spot where one of King George's soldiers thrust his bayonet. The lady was Dr. Holmes' grandmother's mother, and she is represented as being about thirteen years of age, with

Girlish bust, but womanly air ;  
Smooth, square forehead, with uprolled hair ;  
Lips that lover has never kissed ;  
Taper fingers and slender wrist ;  
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade ;  
So they painted the little maid.

And the poet goes on :—

What if a hundred years ago  
Those close-shut lips had answered no,  
When forth the tremulous question came  
That cost the maiden her Norman name,  
And under the folds that look so still,  
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill !  
Should I be I, or would it be  
One tenth another, to nine tenths me ?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's yes,  
Not the light gossamer stirs with less ;  
But never a cable that holds so fast  
Through all the battles of wave and blast,  
And never an echo of speech or song  
That lives in the babbling air so long !  
There were tones in the voice that whispered then,  
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far  
Your images hover, and here we are,  
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone,  
Edward's and Dorothy's—all their own,  
A goodly record for time to show  
Of a syllable spoken so long ago !  
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive  
For the tender whisper that bade me live ?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!  
I will heal the stab of the red-coat's blade,  
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,  
And gild with a rhyme your household name;  
So you shall smile on us brave and bright,  
As first you greeted the morning's light,  
And live untroubled by woes and fears  
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

Dr. Holmes' colouring is invariably artistic. Nothing in his verse offends the eye or grates unpleasantly on the ear. He is a true musician, and his story, joke, or passing fancy is always joined to a measure which never halts. "The Voiceless," perhaps, as well as "Under the Violets," ought to be mentioned among the more tender verses which we have from his pen, in his higher mood.

His novels are object lessons, each one having been written with a well-defined purpose in view. But unlike most novels with a purpose, the three which he has written are nowise dull. The first of the set is

“The Professor’s Story ; or, Elsie Venner,” the second is “The Guardian Angel,” written when the author was in his prime, and the third is “A Mortal Antipathy,” written only a few years ago. In no sense are these works commonplace. Their art is very superb, and while they amuse, they afford the reader much opportunity for reflection. Elsie Venner is a romance of destiny, and a strange physiological condition furnishes the keynote and marrow of the tale. It is Holmes’ snake story, the taint of the serpent appearing in the daughter, whose mother was bitten by a rattle-snake before her babe was born. The traits inherited by this unfortunate offspring from the reptile, find rapid development. She becomes a creature of impulse, and her life spent in a New England village, at a ladies’ academy, with its social and religious surroundings, is described and worked out with rare analytical skill, and by a hand accustomed to deal with curious scientific phenomena. The character draw-

ing is admirable, the episodes are striking and original, and the scenery, carefully elaborated, is managed with fine judgment. Despite the idea, which to some may at first blush appear revolting and startling, there is nothing sensational in the book. The reader observes only the growth and movement of the poison in the girl's system, its effect on her way of life, and its remarkable power over her mind. Horror or disgust at her condition is not for one moment evoked. The style is pure and ennobling, and while our sympathies may be touched, we are at the same time fascinated and entertained, from the first page to the last. Of quite different texture is "The Guardian Angel," a perhaps more readable story, so far as form is concerned, much lighter in character, and less of a study. There is more plot, but the range is not so lofty. It is less philosophical in tone than "Elsie Venner," and the events move quicker. The scene of "The Guardian Angel" is also laid in an ordinary



New England village, and the object of the Doctor-Novelist was to write a tale in which the peculiarities and laws of hysteria should find expression and development. In carrying out his plan, Dr. Holmes has achieved a genuine success. He has taught a lesson, and at the same time has told a deeply interesting story, lightened up here and there with characteristic humour and wit. The characters of Myrtle Hazard and Byles Gridley are drawn with nice discrimination, while the sketch of the village poet, Mr. Gifted Hopkins, is so life-like and realistic, that he has only to be named to be instantly recognized. He is a type of the poet who haunts the newspaper office, and belongs to every town and hamlet. His lady-love is Miss Susan Posey, a delicious creation in Dr. Holmes' best manner. These two prove excellent foils for the stronger personages of the story, and afford much amusement. "A Mortal Antipathy" is less of a romance than the others. The reader will be interested

in the description of a boat race which is exquisitely done.

In biographical writing, we have two books from Dr. Holmes, one a short life of Emerson, and the other a memoir of Motley. Though capable of writing a great biography like Trevelyan's Macaulay or Lockhart's Scott, the doctor has not yet done so. Of the two which he has written, the Motley is the better one. In neither, however, has the author arrived at his own standard of what a biography should be.

Mechanism in Thought and Morals,—a Phi-Beta-Kappa address, delivered at Harvard in 1870,—is one of Dr. Holmes' most luminous contributions to popular science. It is ample in the way of suggestion and the presentation of facts, and though scientific in treatment, the captivating style of the essayist relieves the paper of all heaviness. A brief extract from this fine, thoughtful work may be given here:—

"We wish to remember something in the course of conversation. No effort of the will can reach it; but we say, 'wait a minute, and it will come to me,' and go on talking. Presently, perhaps some minutes later, the idea we are in search of comes all at once into the mind, delivered like a prepaid bundle, laid at the door of consciousness like a foundling in a basket. How it came there we know not. The mind must have been at work groping and feeling for it in the dark; it cannot have come of itself. Yet all the while, our consciousness was busy with other thoughts."

The literary reputation of Dr. Holmes will rest on the three great books which have made his name famous on two continents. Thackeray had passed his fortieth year before he produced his magnificent novel. Holmes, too, was more than forty when he began that unique and original book, "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," one of the most thoughtful, graceful, and able investigations into philosophy and culture ever written. We have the author in every mood, playful and pathetic, witty and wise. Who can

ever forget the young fellow called John, our Benjamin Franklin, the Divinity student, the school-mistress, the landlady's daughter, and the Poor Relation? What characterization is there here! The delightful talk of the Autocrat, his humour, always infectious, his logic, his strong common sense, brighten every page. When he began to write, Dr. Holmes had no settled plan in his head. In November, 1831, he sent an article to the *New England Magazine*, published by Buckingham in Boston, followed by another paper in February, 1832. The idea next occurred to the author in 1857,—a quarter of a century afterwards, when the editors of the *Atlantic Monthly*, then starting on its career, begged him to write something for its pages. He thought of "The Autocrat," and resolved, as he says, "to shake the same bough again, and see if the ripe fruit were better or worse than the early windfalls." At a bound "The Autocrat" leaped into popular favour. The reading public could hardly wait for the

numbers. All sorts of topics are touched upon from nature to mankind. There is the talk about the trees, which one may read a dozen times and feel the better for it. And then comes that charming account of the walk with the school-mistress, when the lovers looked at the elms, and the roses came and went on the maiden's cheeks. And here is a paragraph or two which makes men think :

"Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The angel of life winds them up once for all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection. Tic-tac! tic-tac! go the wheels of thought; our will cannot stop them; they cannot stop themselves; sleep cannot still them; madness only makes them go faster; death alone can break into the case, and seizing the ever-swinging pendulum, which we call the heart, silence at last the clicking of the terrible escapement we have carried so long beneath our wrinkled foreheads.

"If we could only get at them, as we lie on our pillows and count the dead beats of

thought after thought, and image after image, jarring through the overtired organ! Will nobody block those wheels, uncouple that pinion, cut the string that holds those weights, blow up the infernal machine with gun-powder? What a passion comes over us sometimes for silence and rest!—that this dreadful mechanism, unwinding the endless tapestry of time, embroidered with spectral figures of life and death, could have but one brief holiday! Who can wonder that men swing themselves off from beams in hempen lassos?—that they jump off from parapets into the swift and gurgling waters beneath?—that they take counsel of the grim friend who has but to utter his one peremptory monosyllable and the restless machine is shivered as a vase that is dashed upon a marble floor? Under that building which we pass every day there are strong dungeons, where neither hook, nor bar, nor bed-cord, nor drinking vessel from which a sharp fragment may be shattered, shall by any chance be seen. There is nothing for it, when the brain is on fire with the whirling of its wheels, but to spring against the stone wall and silence them with one crash. Ah, they remembered that,—the kind city fathers,—and the walls are nicely padded, so that one can take such exercise as he likes without damag-

ing himself on the very plain and serviceable upholstery. If anybody would only contrive some kind of a lever that one could thrust in among the works of this horrid automaton and check them, or alter their rate of going, what would the world give for the discovery?"

"The Autocrat" was followed by "The Professor at the Breakfast Table,"—a book in every way equal to the first one, though, to be sure, there are critics who pretend to see diminished power in the author's pen. It is, however, full of the same gentle humour and keen analyses of the follies and foibles of human kind. It is a trifle graver, though some of the characters belonging to "The Autocrat" come to the front again. It is in this book that we find that lovely story of Iris,—a masterpiece in itself and one of the sweetest things that has come to us for a hundred years, rivalling to a degree the delicious manner and style of Goldsmith and Lamb. In 1873 the last of the series appeared, and "The Poet" came upon the scene to

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gladden the breakfasters. Every chapter sparkles with originality. "I have," says Dr. Holmes, "unburdened myself in this book, and in some other pages, of what I was born to say. Many things that I have said in my riper days have been aching in my soul since I was a mere child. I say aching, because they conflicted with many of my inherited beliefs, or rather traditions. I did not know then that two strains of blood were striving in me or the mastery—two! twenty, perhaps, twenty thousand, for aught I know—but represented to me by two—paternal and maternal. But I do know this: I have struck a good many chords, first and last, in the consciousness of other people. I confess to a tender feeling for my little brood of thoughts. When they have been welcomed and praised, it has pleased me, and if at any time they have been rudely handled and despitefully treated, it has cost me a little worry. I don't despise reputation, and I should like to be remembered as



having said something worth lasting well enough to last."

There is much philosophy in "The Poet," and if it is less humorous than "The Autocrat," it is more profound than either of its fellows in the great trio. In it the doctor has said enough to make the reputations of half a dozen authors.

"Our Hundred Days in Europe," if written by anyone else save Dr. Holmes, would, perhaps, go begging for a publisher. But he journeyed to the old land with his heart upon his sleeve. He met nearly every man and woman worth knowing, and the Court, Science, and Literature received him with open arms. He had not seen England for half a century. Fifty years before, he was an obscure young man, studying medicine, and known by scarcely half a dozen persons. He returned in 1886, a man of world-wide fame, and every hand was stretched out to do him honour, and to pay him homage. Lord

Houghton,—the famous breakfast giver of his time, certainly, the most successful since the princely Rogers,—had met him in Boston years before, and had begged him again and again to cross the ocean. Letters failing to move the poet, Houghton tried verse upon him, and sent these graceful lines :—

When genius from the furthest West,  
Sierra's Wilds and Poker Flat,  
Can seek our shores with filial zest,  
Why not the genial Autocrat ?

Why is this burden on us laid,  
That friendly London never greets  
The Peer of Locker, Moore, and Praed  
From Boston's almost neighbour streets ?

His earlier and maturer powers  
His own dear land might well engage ;  
We only ask a few kind hours  
Of his serene and vigorous age.

Oh, for a glimpse of glorious Poe !  
His raven grimly answers ' never ! '  
Will Holmes's milder muse say ' no,'  
And keep our hands apart forever ?

But he was not destined to see his friend. When Holmes arrived in England, Lord Houghton was in his grave, and so was Dean Stanley, whose sweetness of disposition had so charmed the autocrat, when the two men had met in Boston a few years before. Ruskin he failed to meet also, for the distinguished word-painter was ill. At a dinner, however, at Archdeacon Farrar's, he spent some time with Sir John Millais and Prof. John Tyndall. Of course, he saw Gladstone, Tennyson, Robert Browning, Chief Justice Coleridge, Du Maurier, the illustrator of *Punch*, Prof. James Bryce who wrote "The American Commonwealth," Lord Wolseley, Britain's "Only General," His Grace of Argyll, Lord Lorne and the Princess Louise,—one of the best amateur painters and sculptors in England,—and many others. Of all these noted ones, he has something bright and entertaining to say. The universities laid their highest honours at his feet. Edinburgh gave him the degree of LL.D., Cambridge that of

Doctor of Letters, and Oxford conferred upon him her D. C. L., his companion on the last occasion being John Bright. It was at Oxford that he met Vice-Chancellor Benjamin Jowett, the Master of Balliol College, Prof. Max Müller, Lord and Lady Herschell, and Prof. James Russell Lowell, his old and unvarying friend. The account of his visit to Europe is told with most engaging directness and simplicity, and though the book has no permanent value, it affords much entertainment for the time.

The reader will experience a feeling of sadness, when he takes up Dr. Holmes' last book, "Over the Tea-cups," for there are indications in the work which warn the public that the genial pen will write hereafter less frequently than usual. It is a witty and delightful book, recalling the Autocrat, the Professor, and the Poet, and yet presenting features not to be found in either. The author dwells on his advancing years, but

this he does not do in a querulous fashion. He speaks of his contemporaries, and compares the ages of old trees, and over the tea-cups a thousand quaint, curious, and splendid things are said. The work takes a wide range, but there is more sunshine than anything else, and that indefinable charm, peculiar to Holmes, enriches every page. One might wish that he would never grow old. As Lowell said, a few years ago, in a birthday verse to the doctor :—

“You keep your youth as yon Scotch firs,  
Whose gaunt line my horizon hems,  
Though twilight all the lowland blurs,  
Hold sunset in their ruddy stems.

. . . . .

Master alike in speech and song  
Of fame's great anti-septic—style,  
You with the classic few belong  
Who tempered wisdom with a smile.

Outlive us all ! Who else like you  
Could sift the seed corn from our chaff  
And make us, with the pen we knew,  
Deathless at least in epitaph ?”

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## JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

(*The Arena, Boston, Mass., December, 1891.*)

—§—

*However Life the stream may stain,  
From thy pure fountain drank my youth  
The simple creed, the faith humane  
In Good, that never can be slain,  
The prayer for inward Light, the search for  
outward Truth!*

BAYARD TAYLOR.

ff

**T**HOUGH Mr. Whittier only died a short time since,\* his task was really finished, and his best work had been given to the public several years ago. Three or four years have elapsed, since the writer spent a few hours with him at his pleasant home in Ames-

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\*Mr. Whittier died on the 7th September, 1892. This essay was published in December, 1891. Here and there, I have altered the tense.

bury, Massachusetts, at that trying season for men advanced in life, mid-winter. The poet did not complain of ill-health, but he looked very frail, and his seventy-nine years told their own story. He spoke cheerfully of his surroundings, and welcomed the visits of friends. A few books he read, and now and then he sent poems to the magazines. His private correspondence had grown to great proportions, and he was seriously thinking of diminishing the strain, even then. Dr. Holmes' printed slip offered an ingenious solution of the difficulty, and it was often in his mind, he said, to adopt it. The fame which his verses had won surprised him, but the hundreds of applications which yearly came to him from strangers, asking for his autograph, took something away from the pleasure which he naturally felt at hearing that his lyrics had made their way to the hearts of the people. In person he was spare and tall. Age had stooped him a little, but not too much, while

his bright, kindly face was sweet to look upon. The photographs and engravings do him scant justice. In them he is represented as a severe and ascetic man, cold in eye, and unsympathetic in manner. But ascetic and severe he was not, and his sympathies, always easily touched, lent to his countenance a sweetness and beauty which the camera had never been able to catch. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and in his correspondence and talk, the conventional "thee" and "thou" were freely used. Familiar with the drama from Shakespeare to Bulwer Lytton, he never attended a theatrical performance in his life. Neither had he ever gone to hear a lecture, even when the orator of the evening happened to be a guest at his house, and lectured in his own neighbourhood.

After Longfellow, it may be said that Mr. Whittier is the most popular of all the American poets. He is distinctively the poet of New England, and his best and most



characteristic work treats especially of rural life and movement in the new world. His contemporaries have picked their flowers from the *parterres* of the world, but Whittier has confined himself to the homely scenes, and incidents, and episodes belonging to his native country. Indeed, he has gone further, and has limited his vision almost to the circle of States embraced in the term New England, New Hampshire in particular receiving the greater amount of attention at his hands. To find how faithfully he has described country life in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, one has only to take up Mr. Longfellow's delightful series of "Poems of Places," two volumes of which are devoted to poetry written about New England, and compare his work with that of the other poets on the same subject. He excelled alike in treatment and in number. His touch was always delicate and true, and even the homeliest things in common life lose their commonplace texture in the setting he gives them.

A lyricist of undoubted strength and individuality, Mr. Whittier fell short when he attempted the epic or the drama. The lyric readily lent itself to his muse, and the leaping numbers proclaimed at once his correct and remarkable ear for melody, and his fine sense of touch. His poetry suggests the idea that his gift is fluency of expression. Rhyme, apparently, had no terrors for him, and one can imagine that he revised and changed very little. Some of his more striking pieces were undoubtedly written at white heat. Imagination of the highest order they do not exhibit, but of their music and harmony there can be no question.

Before considering his work, a little may be said of the poet in the way of biography. An interesting life of him has been written by Dr. Underwood, who has adopted the same agreeable method of inducing the English reader to look at the writings of Mr. Longfellow and Professor Lowell. Mr. Sted-

man, the banker poet, gives us, in his exhaustive "Poets of America," much in the way of genial criticism concerning the subject of this sketch, and in various essays by different pens, the Quaker poet and his career in letters, have been discussed and enlarged upon. Some day an adequate life of him will appear, but, in the meantime, the public will have to be content with fragmentary notes. He was born at Haverhill, Massachusetts, on the 17th December, 1807, in a house which still stands a short distance from the main road. The curious pilgrim is attracted to the spot, for it is the scene of many of the poet's tenderest songs and pastorals. At seven years of age, the lad was sent to school, where he met Joshua Coffin, the historian of Newbury, his first teacher and life-long friend. There is a school-master mentioned in "Snow-bound," the most genre of Mr. Whittier's work, as a

"brisk wielder of the birch and rule,"

but the portrait is not intended for Coffin.  
It is that of a young man, unnamed, who  
came from Dartmouth College, with face

“Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared  
The uncertain prophecy of beard.”

Whittier's school-days were uneventful,  
and his opportunities for gaining an edu-  
cation were limited, the schools being poor,  
and the teachers, who were changed every  
year, having little skill in their art. Books,  
too, were few in number. In his father's house  
there were not more than twenty volumes  
all told, and the majority of these were dull  
indeed. One book, the reader will admit,  
had little in it to attract a youth of Whittier's  
calibre. It was the “Davideis,” by Thomas  
Ellwood, the Quaker poet, and the inspirer  
of Milton's “Paradise Regained.” Yet the  
New England boy read it, and re-read it,  
and the Puritan blood in his veins was thrill-  
ed with the story of David's life, albeit his  
biographer relates the tale in stilted phrase,

and a style that is dullness itself. The book is a memory only now, but it formed a part of Whittier's early reading. A book of travel or adventure was eagerly prized by him, and often he would walk many miles away to borrow a new volume. Of course the reading of the Bible was a constant practice in the Whittier household, and on First-day afternoons Mrs. Whittier read and expounded the Scriptures to her children, and familiarized them with the truths of the Old and New Testaments. When not at school, Whittier worked about the place, learning, among other things, the craft of the shoemaker, though he did not adopt the calling in after life. Until he was eighteen, he lived at the homestead, and worked on the farm. One day a "pawky auld carle" stopped at the house for refreshment, and according to the custom of those days, the visitor was regaled with bread and a mug of home-made cider. In return for this courtesy, he sang in a full, rich voice, "Bonnie

Doon," "Highland Mary," and "Auld Lang Syne." The ballads impressed the youthful poet at once and he longed to read, in a book of his own, the songs and poems of Burns. Joshua Coffin was the first to put into his hands the volume his heart craved, and he read it with great delight, mastering the dialect by the aid of the glossary. He soon began writing verses himself after the manner of the Scottish poet. These efforts, however, have not been preserved, but the influence of Burns over Whittier's mind remained forever. His elder sister warmly encouraged him to persevere and her advice he took, but his parents were not admitted at first into the secret. William Lloyd Garrison, the poet's senior by three years, founded, in 1826, the Newburyport *Free Press*. To that journal Whittier sent "The Deity,"—a paraphrase about the prophet Elijah. It was amateurish, of course, but as a first effort it proved by no means discreditable. Garrison admired it, and gave it a prominent

place in the Poet's Corner. Whittier's heart jumped when he saw it in print. He was mending a fence when the news-carrier came riding along the road at a dashing pace, and as the paper fluttered at his feet he picked it up and perhaps the first lines which caught his eye were his own verses. It is said that he "stood rooted to the spot, and had to be called several times before he could return to sublunary affairs." He was hoeing in a cornfield when the editor called to see him. Garrison had learned the name of his contributor, through the poet's sister, Mary, and he was so hearty in his praises and congratulations that Whittier was profoundly touched. A family council was immediately held. Whittier *père* was called in, but he remonstrated against putting literary notions into the young man's head. There were many obstacles to surmount. Garrison advised Whittier to attend a public institution where he could receive proper training. This expense, however, the elder Whittier could not

afford. The farm barely paid its way, but at last the young man thought that he saw a rift in the cloud, and he resolved to take his friend's advice. He acquired the mystery and art of slipper and shoe making, and during the ensuing season he earned enough to pay for a suit of clothes, and his board and tuition for half a year. He went to the academy in Haverhill, in April, 1827, where he remained six months, prosecuting his studies with zeal and energy. In the following winter, he taught the district school at West Amesbury, and in the spring he returned to the academy for another term. While studying and teaching, he continued to write for the press, and for a time he occupied the chair of assistant editor of the *American Manufacturer*, a protectionist paper, friendly to the aspirations of Henry Clay. For this service he was paid nine dollars a week, but his father requiring him on the farm, he returned home, and remained there until July, 1830. It will not be neces-



sary to trace in detail Whittier's editorial career. He became connected with many papers, and his writings in prose and verse soon grew voluminous and popular. He succeeded George D. Prentice in the management of the *Weekly Review* at Hartford, Conn., and finally became chief editor of that journal. A year and a half later, he went back to Haverhill.

In 1833, his great life-work began in earnest. It was at that time that a little band of brave men took their stand on the slavery question. The abolitionists, as they were then called, were regarded with high disfavour by the people of the North and South alike. They were openly assailed and insulted in the streets, mobs struck them down, and in the public lecture-rooms they were attacked with stones. The very word abolitionist was used as a term of reproach. Seldom has a great reform been carried to a successful issue under social trials so severe, and the wonder is that men could be found willing to

undertake the cause of the slave at the sacrifice entailed. Every person connected with it literally carried his life in his hands, and the unfriendly press conducted as it was with bitterness and rancor, hounded the assailants of the movement to deeds of violence and atrocity. In Philadelphia, on the 4th, 5th, and 6th December, the National Convention was held. Garrison had just returned from England, full of the spirit of British freedom of speech and manhood. Whittier attended the Congress as delegate and secretary. Wendell Phillips, in his prime, was the principal speaker. Whittier signed the famous declaration of sentiments, and became, by that act, forever committed to the cause. A copy of this document he kept to the last, framed with the wood of Pennsylvania Hall, which the pro-slavery mob destroyed a few years afterwards. In 1834, he helped to establish an anti-slavery society in Haverhill, but at the first meeting the crowd broke in and scattered the audience in all directions.

Samuel May with great difficulty escaped death, and Elizabeth Whittier, the poet's sister, was severely bruised. But these scenes were only a repetition of experiences going on all over the Northern States. Whittier with voice and pen warred against the blight on his native land, and his poems, at first despised, after a time, burned into the minds of the people and influenced public thought. He wrote so much that his work, at this period, proved often uneven in merit. Few of the anti-slavery poems are worthy to stand alongside of his later pieces, but their sincerity and earnestness give them an exalted and assured position in the literature of America. It must not be forgotten that many of them were written for a purpose, and that purpose they served well. The "Songs of Freedom" have a place of their own in the letters of the United States, and though the critic of style and of manner may find them faulty and wanting in certain forms of poetic beauty, no one will doubt

their vigour and terrible earnestness. The noble "Song of the Slaves in the Desert" is very strong. Its origin may be traced to *Richardson's Journal*. One evening the female slaves were full of excitement, and sang in their strange, weird fashion the melancholy dirge which they often chanted when in a fearful mood. The song was in the Bornou or Mandara tongue, and the word *Rubee* was frequently heard. Curious to know the purport of these plaintive strains, Richardson asked Said what the slaves were singing about. The interpreter responded, "They sing of *Rubee* (God), and they ask from Him their Atka, which means their certificate of freedom ! Oh, where are we going, O God ? The world is large, O God ; Bornou was a pleasant country, full of good things ; but this is a bad country, and we are miserable." Over and over again these poor creatures sang these words, wringing their hands till fatigue and suffering struck them down, and then the silence of the desert remained un-

broken for a time. It was this sad story of anguish and despair that emphasized itself into the heart of the New England poet, and he wrote his tearful, pathetic song with every sympathy keenly aroused.

In another poem he cries :—

“ Woe, then, to all who grind  
Their brethren of a common Father down.”

And again he exclaims with indignation :—

“ What, ho! *Our* countrymen in chains?  
The whip on woman’s shrinking flesh?  
Our soil yet reddened with the stains  
Caught from her scourging, warm and  
fresh?

“ What! mothers from their children riven?  
What! God’s own image bought and  
sold?  
Americans to market driven,  
And bartered as the brute for gold?”

These songs nerved the people to action. Sharp and aggressive and full of truth, they became formidable weapons in the hands of the campaigners. Garrison deprecated polit-

ical action, but Whittier was strongly in favour of it. Garrison refused to vote, but Whittier had great faith in the ballot-box. Both men pursued their way, working together when convenient, and never losing sight of the mighty task they had in view. Whittier's aim was to reach the masses, and, while he wrote much in prose, he soon found that it was his poetry which touched men's hearts and inflamed their breasts. So he kept on singing his songs of freedom, and this burst in the *Liberator* fell like a thunder clap on startled ears :—

“ Go,—let us ask of Constantine  
To loose his grasp on Poland's throat ;  
And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line  
To spare the struggling Suliote ;—  
Will not the scorching answer come  
From turbaned Turk and scornful Russ :  
' Go, loose your fettered slaves at home,  
Then turn and ask the like of us ' ? ”

At the meetings of the anti-slavery societies, poems by Whittier were always read

amid enthusiasm. Then came the war and Lincoln's proclamation emancipating the black man, and the despised abolitionist's victory was complete. But the old Adam died hard, particularly in Boston. It was proposed, on the 1st of January, 1863, to celebrate the edict of freedom to the slave. It proved a difficult task to get men to serve on the committee. Singers were invited to take part. Most of them returned their invitations with indignant comments, and the chorus was meagre and unsatisfactory. But, after all, the meeting was fairly successful, though the music was weak. Emerson read his "Boston Hymn," and his serene and benign presence, doubtless, saved the demonstration from failure.

The outbreak of hostilities between the North and the South was the signal for the writers of war songs to move the country. Whittier, from whom much was expected, hesitated to engage his pen. The secession movement he regarded as the performance

of a madman. Of its failure he never held the slightest doubt, but being a man of peace, he wished to remain a silent but heart-wrung spectator. Once, indeed, he said that he would not write, but his mind underwent a change, at the last, and the splendid collection, "In War Time," was the result. The poems in that volume appeared at intervals, during the progress of the fratricidal strife. Most of them are in ballad form, and the more famous of them all is "Barbara Frietchie,"—founded on a legend which, in after years, the poet discovered was not historically correct. Whittier had the story from a Virginian lady. It runs thus: "When Lee's army occupied Frederick, the only Union flag displayed in the city was held from an attic by Mrs. Barbara Frietchie, a widow, aged ninety-seven years. She was born in 1766, and was ten years old at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, and fifteen years old at its close. At that impressionable age, patriotism



exerted deep influence on her mind. On the morning when the advance of Lee's army, led by Stonewall Jackson, entered Frederick, every Union flag was lowered and the halyards cut. Every store and dwelling-house was closed. The inhabitants retired indoors, the streets were deserted, and, to quote the official report, the city wore a churchyard aspect. But Barbara Frietchie, taking one of the Union flags, went up to the top of her house, opened a garret window, and held the banner out. The Southern army marched up the street, saw the flag, and obeyed the order to halt and fire! A volley was discharged at the window from which the flag was displayed. The staff was partly broken, so that the bunting drooped. The old lady drew it in, broke off the fragment, and taking the stump with the flag attached to it in her hand, stretched herself as far out of the window as she could, and waved the Stars and Stripes over the heads of the troops below. In a voice of in-

dignation, shrill with age, she called out, 'Fire at this old head, then, boys ; it is not more venerable than your flag.' The soldiers in gray fired no more, but passed on in silence and with downcast looks. She secured the flag in its place, where it waved unmolested during the whole of the occupation of the city. She died a few days after the Federal troops entered Frederick, some say from joy, others assert that her death was caused by excitement and fatigue :"—

" Honour to her ! and let a tear  
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

" Over Barbara Frietchie's grave  
Flag of Freedom and Union wave !

" Peace and order and beauty draw  
Round thy symbol of light and law ;

" And ever the stars above look down  
On thy stars below in Frederick town."

The abolition of slavery and the close of  
the war left Whittier free to deal with less

aggressive forms of human life and activity. From his muse have come some of the sweetest pastorals of the time. His stanzas are always simple. They ring with melody and are lavish in fancy, though, perhaps, not of the highest order. His art, measured by the canons that one would apply to Tennyson, is crude, but of his naturalness, his interpretation of rural life and work, his buoyancy of spirit, and vividness in the employment of local colour, nothing can be said in the way of dispraise. Whittier is not a scholar's poet, though learned men may read and enjoy him. He writes for the people, just as Ebenezer Elliott, the corn-law rhymers, wrote, though, it may be said the American poet's work is of superior metal and finish. Whittier's pastorals have emphasized in striking terms the beauty of local river and stream, hill and valley about Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire. They are rich in lyrical intensity, and readily win the favour of the reader. His masterpiece is undoubtedly

"Snow-bound." Of that the critics are all agreed. It is a touching story of country experiences in New England, and the fact that it is largely a reminiscence of the poet's own early life lends additional charm and attractiveness to the narrative. Stedman calls it Whittier's "most complete production, an idyl already pictured for him by the camera of his own heart." John Burroughs declares it to be "the most faithful picture of our northern winter that has yet been put into poetry," and Underwood says it is "the clearest expression of Whittier's genius." It is full of heart touches and vivid word-painting. The whole round of daily life, in a farm-house is described. Not a detail is wanting. The story is picturesque, the incident and episode are adroitly managed, the portraiture is true to nature, and, from the first line to the last, the performance is even and perfect. This scene will convey an idea of the poet's manner, in one of his loftier flights in description :—

“ The wind blew east : we heard the roar  
Of ocean on his wintry shore,  
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there  
Beat with low rhythm on inland air.  
Meanwhile, we did our nightly chores,—  
Brought in the wood from out of doors,  
Littered the stalls, and from the mows  
Raked down the herd’s grass for the cows ;  
Heard the horse whinneying for his corn ;  
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,  
Impatient down the stanchion rows  
The cattle shake their walnut bows.”

And this :—

“ Shut in from all the world without,  
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,  
Content to let the north wind roar  
In baffled rage at pane and door,  
While the red long before us beat  
The frost line back with tropic heat ;  
And, ever, when a louder blast  
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,  
The merrier up its roaring draught  
The great throat of the chimney laughed ;  
The house dog on his paws outspread  
Laid to the fire his drowsy head ;  
The cat’s dark silhouette on the wall  
A couchant tiger’s seemed to fall ;

And, for the winter fireside meet,  
Between the andirons' straddling feet,  
The mug of cider simmered slow,  
The apples sputtered in a row,  
And, close at hand, the basket stood  
With nuts from brown October's wood."

The "Tent on the Beach," which in chronological order follows "Snow-bound," is especially interesting on account of its strong, local coloring. The scene is laid at Salisbury Beach. The bay, the Merrimac, and the Isle of Shoals, are all within view. The poet, Bayard Taylor, and James T. Fields, are the principal *personæ* of the poem. The idea and treatment are simple, and the talk, always exquisitely natural, is of old times. The portraits are thus outlined. Of himself, the poet writes:—

"And one there was, a dreamer born,  
Who, with a mission to fulfil,  
Had left the muses' haunts to turn  
The crank of an opinion mill,  
Making his rustic reed of song  
A weapon in the war with wrong."

## The one

“ Whose Arab face was tanned  
By tropic sun and boreal frost ;  
So travelled there was scarce a land  
Or people left him to exhaust,”

was Bayard Taylor, poet, traveller, and diplomatist.

And this is Fields, the poet's friend, publisher, and adviser.

“ One, with beard scarce silvered, bore  
A ready credence in his looks,  
A lettered magnate, lording o'er  
An ever-widening realm of books.”

“ The Barefoot Boy,” is a homely effort which made its way into popularity at a bound. Its perfect simplicity is, perhaps, its highest recommendation. The artists took it up. Eastman Johnson painted a lovely picture of the lad with his cheeks of tan and turned-up pantaloons, and the chromo manufacturers sent copies of it broadcast. Prang, the art publisher, produced a very

fine impression of the picture. Whittier admired it so much that he wrote a most flattering opinion of its merits. Some time after this, a wretched imitation of the Prang "Study" appeared in the print market, bearing the poet's endorsement. The paltry forgery so disgusted Whittier that he promptly wrote to Prang, saying : " I have heard of writers who could pass judgment upon works of art without ever seeing them, but the part assigned me by this use of my letter to making me the critic of a thing not in existence, adds to their ingenuity the gift of prophecy. It seems to be hazardous to praise anything. There is no knowing to what strange uses one's words may be put. When a good deal younger than I am now, I addressed some laudatory lines to Henry Clay, but the newspapers soon transferred them to Thomas H. Benton, and it was even said that the saints of Nauvoo made them do duty in the apotheosis of the prophet, Joseph Smith. My opinions as an art critic are



not worth much to the public, and as they seem to be as uncertain and erratic in their directions as an Australian boomerang, I shall, I think, be chary in future in giving them. I don't think I should dare speak favourably of the Venus de Medici, as I might expect to find my words affixed to some bar-room lithograph of the bearded woman."

Underwood says that "'The Barefoot Boy' is clearly autobiographical, and between its simple lines we look as through magic lenses into the very heart of his childhood."

"Laughed the brook for my delight  
Through the day and through the night,  
Whispering at the garden wall,  
Talked with me from fall to fall,  
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,  
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,  
Mine, on bending orchard trees,  
Apples of Hesperides."

"Maud Muller," though often faulty in metre, illustrates very well the poet's method

of telling a story in verse. His deep religious feeling is emphasized notably in the "Brother of Mercy," "The Gift of Trite-mius," a very powerful poem, "Barclay of Ury," and "The Two Rabbis." Two poems have been written by Whittier on "The Sisters," one after a picture by Barry,—musical and tender,—and the other in ballad form, vigorous, and trenching strongly on the dramatic. The latter tells the tragical story of Annie and Rhoda, who lived near the great sea. They awoke one night startled by the sound of roaring waters, and the noise of heavy waves climbing the rocky coast. Annie was gentle and timid. Rhoda was fearless and bold. Annie shuddered at the blast, and cried in fear and agony, but Rhoda ordered her back to bed, and said no good ever came of watching a storm. But Annie still shrank down in terror, for above the din and loud roar of the battling elements, she heard her name called, and nearer and nearer came the cry on the winding blast of

the storm. It was the voice of a drowning man, and Estwick Hall, of the Heron, was out in the fury of the tempest. But Rhoda, who loved Hall of the Heron, said to Annie :

“ . . . with eyes aflame,  
Thou liest, he would never call thy name.

If he did, I would pray the wind and sea,  
To keep him forever from thee and me.”

Then roared the angry sea again, and another blast rode on the gale, and a dying wail reached the stricken ears of the sisters. Hall of the Heron was dead !

In Whittier's “ Pennsylvania Pilgrim,” life among the Quaker colonists of two hundred years ago is depicted with keen directness of purpose. Francis Daniel Pastorius is the hero of the poem. He was a doctor of laws, his alma mater being at Nuremburg. While at Frankfort, he became interested in the teachings of Spencer, the head of the society of Pietists or Mystics, who in the

seventeenth century revived the worship of Tauler and the Friends of God. In 1683, Pastorius crossed the ocean and settled on a tract of land near the present city of Philadelphia, which had been purchased from William Penn. He joined the Society of Friends, and became the recognized head and law-giver of the place. He drew up a memorial against slave-holding in 1688, which was adopted by the Germantown Friends. Whittier says that this was the first protest ever made by a religious body against slavery. The characters in the poem are drawn with critical discrimination, particularly those of Pastorius and his wife Anna, the daughter of Doctor Klosterman, of Mulheim. All that is characteristic of Quakerism, and the zeal and faith of its votaries, are set forth in this tribute with an enthusiasm not frequently encountered even in Whittier's verse. The poet's large Catholicity is revealed in every line, and no suggestion appears of affectation, narrowness or prejudice.

Little need be said of Whittier's prose writings. A portion only of them has been preserved and published. At best his prose was ephemeral. "Margaret Smith's Journal," a sort of historical novel, or series of character sketches, is the more important performance of the collection. It deals with the early history of the colony, and to the antiquary offers much that is entertaining. The author of the journal is supposed to be a Church of England woman, and she treats with candour the problems of 1678. Here and there poems appear, scattered through the narrative, but the quaint manner of the tale is its chiefest quality. Whittier has also written "Old Portraits and Modern Sketches," "Literary Recreations," and "Miscellanies," but their value is not of much moment. One of his minor essays is devoted to a dissection of Carlyle's "Latter-day Pamphlets." In this the Sage of Ecclefechan is taken to task for his attitude on the slave question. But it is solely as a lyricist that the fame of Whittier

will live. In this department of poesy he is supreme. He never married. For years his constant companion was his sister, Elizabeth, with whom he lived, now at Amesbury and again at Danvers. She, too, was a graceful poet, and in one of her brother's volumes, some of her more striking pieces are included. These are "The Dream of Argyll," "Lady Franklin," and "The Wedding Veil."

Mr. Whittier's last book, published while he was on his death-bed, is "At Sundown," containing the poems written by him, from 1886 to 1892.

